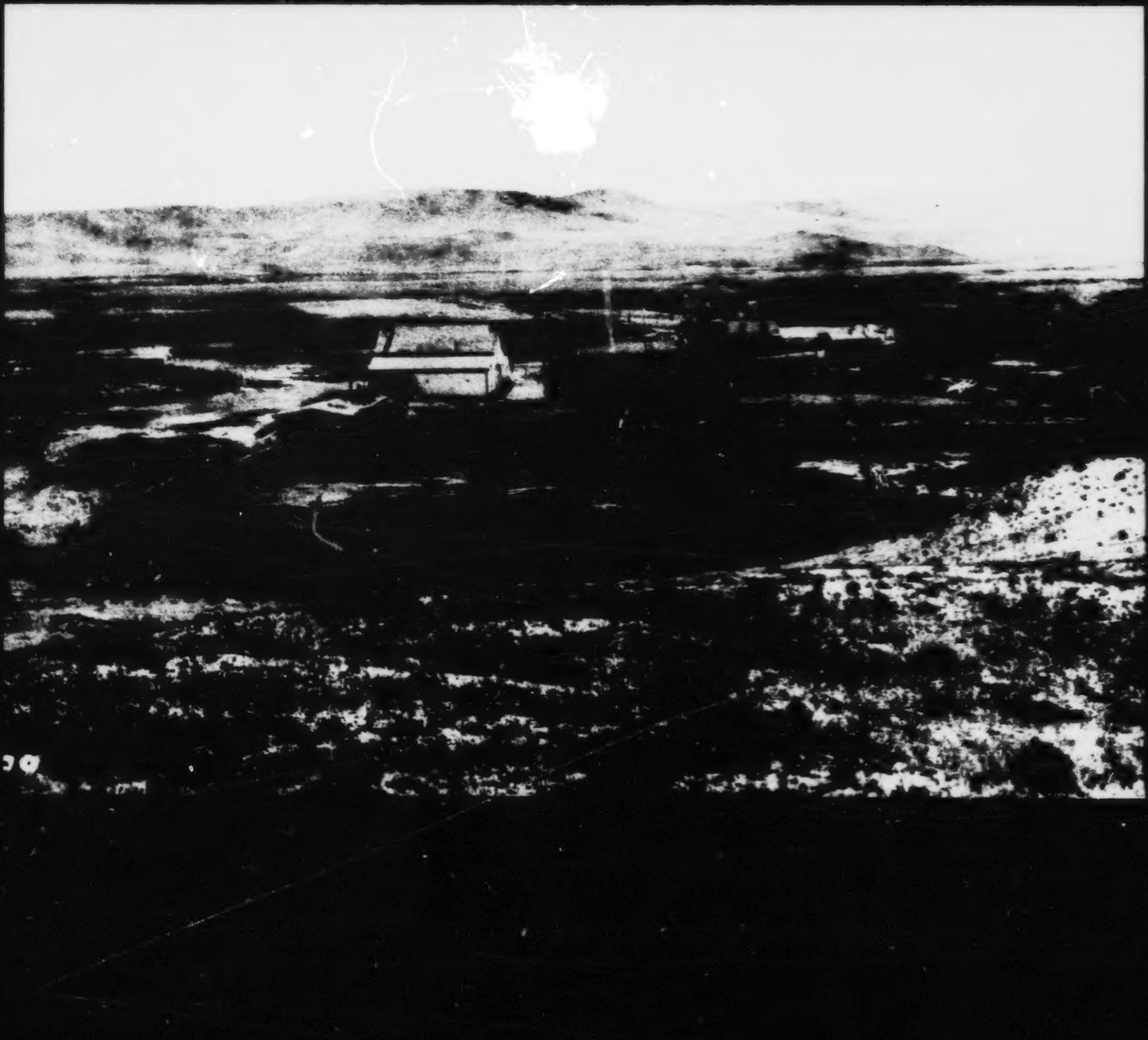

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History and Archaeology
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FROM WOOD MOUNTAIN TO THE WHITEMUD: A HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE GRASSLANDS NATIONAL PARK AREA

D.M. Loveridge and Barry Potyondi

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PREFACE

This study was prepared for the Historic Resources Division of Parks Canada (Prairie Region), under the supervision of Dr. Frits Pannekoek. It examines the history of the area in southwestern Saskatchewan in which the proposed Grasslands National Park is located. At the risk of belabouring the obvious, it must be emphasized that it is a survey history, not an exhaustive investigation. The purpose of the exercise was to provide an interpretive historical framework for study of the proposed park, in a reasonably short time. The restrictions imposed by these aims greatly affected the planning and execution of the project, and are evident in the structure and content of the resulting study.

The research program for the Grasslands history project was fairly straightforward. The authors first selected a relatively large geographical unit encompassing the small and isolated park "core areas," and divided the history of this study-area into two manageable parts. It was clear from the beginning that 1908 was the natural dividing-line, for both thematic and chronological reasons. Three to four months were allotted for peparation and basic research, during which time an intensive survey of the secondary literature and a general inventory and examination of primary sources were conducted. In the course of this research, the main subjects to be presented were identified and outlined. During the two months remaining for writing, each of these was dealt with in a discrete chapter, chapter section or (in certain cases) appendix, which provided a narrative presentation and interpretation of the main points, backed with as much specific information as could be assembled. In the text, these sections are arranged in a rough chronological order, based on the initial date of appearance of the subject concerned. Many, however, overlap in time, and the relationships involved could not always be adequately clarified in the context of the individual subject. As a partial remedy, a brief chronological and thematic summary (Part 1) was prepared. This loose organization, while having certain disadvantages, was deemed the optimum one for the purposes of a rapid and thorough survey.

The project's work schedule could well have fallen apart at a very early stage without the support provided by the staffs of several archival institutions. Aside from the uniformly high quality of service provided, their ability to answer foolish questions at short notice, and with enviable forbearance, was indispensable. The authors would particularly like to thank the staffs of the Archives of Saskatchewan in Regina and Saskatoon, the Glenbow-Alberta Institute Archives and Library in Calgary, and the Provincial Archives and Library of Manitoba in Winnipeg, and those of the libraries at the Universities of Manitoba, Regina and Saskatchewan, for their cooperation and assistance. The quick responses of the staff of the Public Archives in Ottawa, and of a number of local historians in the park area, to our requests for information was much appreciated. We would also like to express our thanks to the many individuals who tendered advice and assistance when problems arose.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the opinions expressed and evaluations made in this study are the authors', and do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of Parks Canada or its employees. Instances in which the opinions and evaluations of one author do not coincide exactly with those of the other can be interpreted either as proof that two heads are not always better than one, or as evidence that this study is a loose combination of two separate and distinct units of historical research. The reader is free to decide for him or herself which is the case. The authors' concensus on the matter lies somewhere between these two points.

Submitted for publication 1977 by D.M. Loveridge and Barry Potyondi.

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PART I INTRODUCTION

Killdeer Badlands region, Grasslands National Park.
(Interpretation Division, Parks Canada, Prairie Region, Winnipeg)

INTRODUCTION

The proposed Grasslands National Park consists of three small "core areas" situated along the International Boundary in southwestern Saskatchewan. Two of these are located in the Frenchman River valley, and one is found in the Rock Creek Badlands section of the Wood Mountain plateau. A total of 104.5 square miles of badlands, coulees and river valley are involved at the present time. These particular lands were selected by Parks Canada as being representative of the endangered natural grasslands of the southern Canadian plains - not because they contained features of historical interest. In point of fact, little has ever taken place within the core areas, memorable or otherwise. At the same time, however, the park has a strong historical element in its composition and character. To understand this apparent contradiction, it is necessary to go outside of Grasslands' narrow boundaries. The park does not take on its historical identity until seen in the larger context provided by the surrounding area. An examination of the human history of the Wood Mountain plateau and lower Frenchman River valley area shows that the historical significance of the proposed Grasslands National Park lies in what it represents, far more than in what it contains by way of sites and artifacts.

Throughout its recorded history the area in which the proposed park is situated has been the last frontier of the Canadian prairie West. The Plains Indian tribes had long treated it as a no-man's-land, but changing circumstances made it the last refuge from the advance of white civilization for both Indians and Métis. The last of the northern buffalo herds were found here, and it was the last sector of the northwestern plains to be penetrated by fur traders, scientific explorers and land surveyors. The North West Mounted Police came early to foster and defend white settlement but had a long wait before the advent of intensive agricultural settlement and civil government relieved them of their border vigil. It was the last ranching frontier in the prairie West and, finally, the "Last, Best West" of prairie farmers.

The people who have come to the park area during the last century have sought different things. The Indians and Métis wanted buffalo. When the buffalo were exterminated, ranchers came for the grass and open range. Then, after the best parts of the West had been occupied, farmers came looking for agricultural land. In each case, their purpose was essentially the same. Each group sought something which was no longer available elsewhere in the quantity and quality deemed necessary to support a particular way of life. Three basic patterns of resource-use, developed (and successful) in other parts of the plains were in turn brought into the semi-arid park area - with, in turn, essentially the same result. If the "comparative advantage" offered by the park area changed over time, the marginal nature of its resources did not. In each instance the form of resource-use originally introduced proved to be too intensive for the resource base to bear, in one way or other. Its practitioners were then faced with a choice between departure or a major readjustment in their way of life. The area has been the "last frontier" in a terminal, as well as a relative, sense.

Semi-arid grassland conditions have prevailed in the park area since the glaciers retreated over it more than ten thousand years ago. The parent soil materials deposited by ice and glacial meltwater were much the same as those found elsewhere in the prairies, but soil development in the succeeding millenia was retarded by the dry climate and the related lack of appropriate vegetation. As a result, arable soils were and are in short supply outside of the Old Wives plain and parts of the Frenchman River valley. Much of the Wood Mountain plateau and a significant portion of the Frenchman plain have only a thin veneer of rocky soil, and the rough terrain found in many districts in the south further restricts agricultural potential. Although a few trees and shrubs are found in choice locations, short grass is the only vegetation which is normally found throughout the area and even this varies in nutritive value in relation to the quality of the soils. While soils are very fertile in some districts, and the grasses on some of the range provide excellent forage, much of the area has little to recommend it.

The uses to which the arable soils and the grass can be put and, more importantly, the extent to which they can be used, are limited by climatic conditions. In normal summers, the park area receives little precipitation to begin with, and the available moisture is further reduced by evaporation. By July, surface water is often in short supply. Long, cold, and relatively dry winters are the rule. The chief characteristic of the climate, however, is its variability. Although abnormally wet summers are not unknown, the variation is usually on the side of drought. On occasion, optimum conditions are experienced but on the whole, natural resources are limited in both the quality and quantity available, and fluctuations in supply due to the climate are unpredictable.

Before 1880 the inhabitants of the western plains had three main criteria for rating the value of a given area: grass, game and water. Those areas where all three were available on a fairly reliable basis, seasonal or year-round, provided the focal points for nomadic life. The Wood Mountain country, it would seem, was not one of these. It had grass and, therefore, game and it had water and wood but not always. As a result, the Plains Indians, and later the Métis, generally preferred to go elsewhere. This is not to say that the park area was entirely ignored. When grass and water happened to be available and game was plentiful, it was visited but for the most part such use was sporadic. The geographical location of the area also contributed to this. The Wood Mountain country lies in the centre of a rectangle formed by the South Saskatchewan and Missouri River valleys, to the north and south, and by the Cypress Hills and Missouri Coteau, to the west and east. With the partial exception of the latter, each of these was an important feature on the northwestern plains, offering a reliable source of grass, wood and water. If each was controlled by a different tribal group - as was frequently the case - this left the resource-poor Wood Mountain country as a central "neutral" ground - a place suitable only for occasional wary hunting or war parties.

While the archaeological evidence is by no means conclusive, it appears that the park area was first entered by prehistoric Indians shortly after the last glacier retreated. The first inhabitants, the paleoindian "big game hunters," brought with them the basic subsistence pattern followed for the next ten millenia. They were nomadic hunters who pursued the bison (and now-extinct forms of large game) on foot, and travelled in small family bands. They may have hunted in the area, when game was available, for several thousand years, until a long period of drought forced them away in search of greener pastures. In time, the climate improved and a different group moved in - once again, nomadic buffalo hunters. The development of the spear-thrower and improved communal hunting techniques, however, gave them an advantage over their ancestors, allowing a larger population to use the area. When the bow and arrow and buffalo jump appeared a thousand years later, the ability of the Indians to make a living on the dry plains was further enhanced. For the first time, the means of acquiring a surplus of food and other goods were available but despite these developments, the way of life of the late prehistoric Indians was essentially the same as that of their predecessors. They remained buffalo-hunting pedestrian nomads with a society and culture based on the family hunting band. For the most part, the introduction of the horse in the northwestern plains in the 18th century simply intensified these traits. It made the Indians more mobile and improved their chances of getting enough to eat. It did not cause radical changes in the Plains' way of life.

The horse was one of the few "gifts" from Europe that did not entail major disruptions in the northwestern plains. Others that came with it certainly did. Even before whites actually reached the plains, the advancing frontier of white expansion had pushed woodland tribes - such as the Sioux - westwards, while firearms and diseases imported with the fur trade upset the balance of power among indigenous tribes. When the northern Plains Indians first acquired the horse, the dominant tribe in the park area was the Gros Ventre, an ally of the Blackfoot Confederacy. In the late 1700s however, the advance of the better-armed Cree and Assiniboine onto the plains pushed these two groups to the south and west, respectively. But, at first, the new owners did not take up permanent residence in the park area. It is probable that the Wood Mountain country was a no-man's-land for almost a century thereafter. The Cree and Assiniboine not only had to deal with their Gros Ventre and Blackfoot neighbours, but also with the Sioux, who were then pushing west along the Missouri. The park area lay in a zone claimed by all of these tribes. While the Cree and Assiniboine were eventually successful in forcing the Blackfoot further to the west, the Sioux remained a threat until the 1860s.

The lack of permanent inhabitants in the park area during the first half of the 19th century largely explains the failure of both American and Hudson's Bay Company traders to venture there during this period. By the 1830s the South Saskatchewan and Missouri routes to the plains had both been opened up, but, after a few tentative attempts to seek furs in the central zone, the traders working along both these lines of communication turned their attention to the far west. At this time the unoccupied Cypress Hills and Wood Mountain area had little to offer except buffalo hides, meat and trouble. None of these products were in great demand with the traders. This situation did not begin to change for another thirty years.

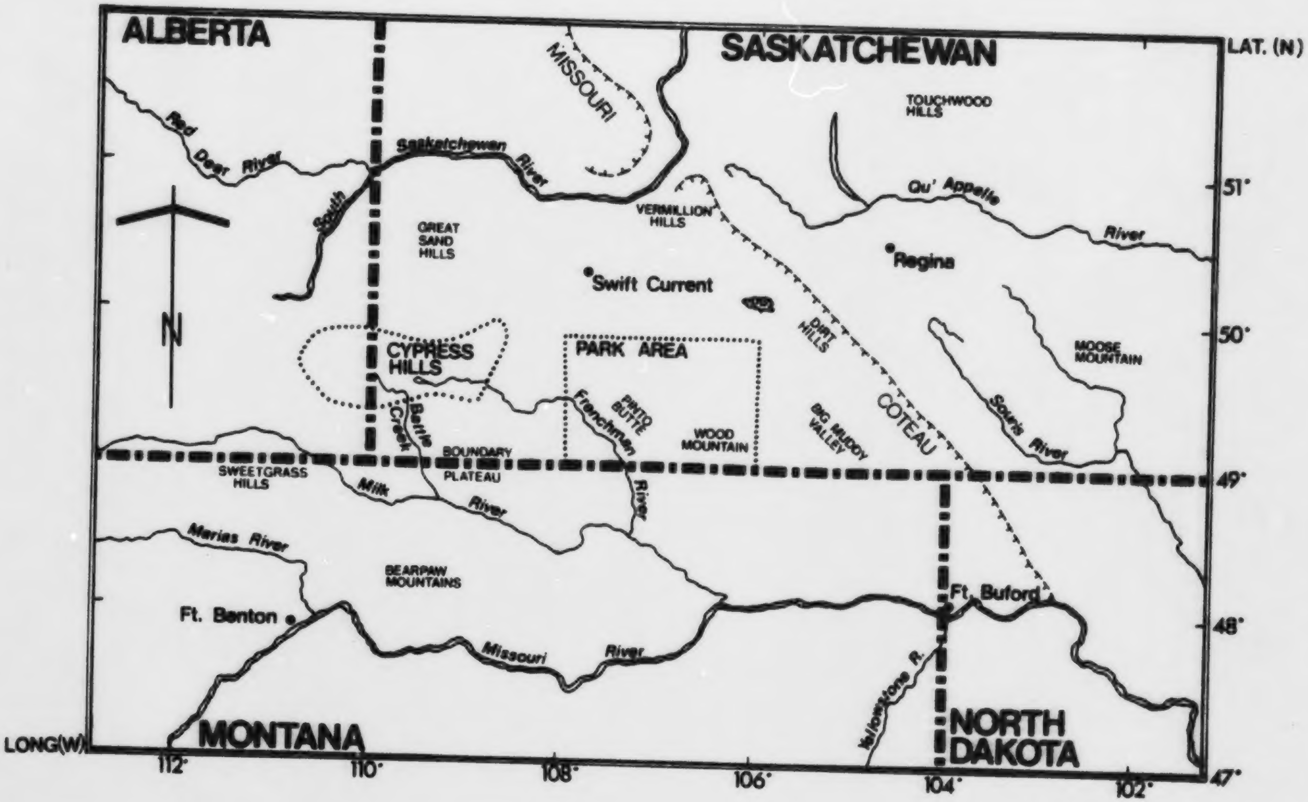

ALBERTA
SASKATCHEWAN
MONTANA
NORTH DAKOTA
LAT. (N)
LONG(W)
51°
50°
49°
48°
47°
112°
110°
108°
106°
104°
102°
N
Red Deer River
South Saskatchewan River
MISSOURI
TOUCHWOOD HILLS
Qu' Appelle River
Regina
VERMILLION HILLS
GREAT SAND HILLS
Swift Current
DIRT HILLS
MOOSE MOUNTAIN
CYPRESS HILLS
PARK AREA
PINTO BUTTE
WOOD MOUNTAIN
BIG MUDDY VALLEY
COTEAU
Souris River
Battle Creek
Frenchman River
BOUNDARY PLATEAU
SWEETGRASS HILLS
Milk River
Marias River
BEARPAW MOUNTAINS
Ft. Benton
Missouri River
Ft. Buford
Yellowstone R.
Miles
0
25
50

FIG 1. The Park Area in the Northwestern Plains

In the middle of the 19th century the pace of white expansion onto the plains began to step up. This manifested itself in a number of ways, all of which affected the situation in the Wood Mountain country. The exploratory expeditions of Stevens' American party and Palliser's and Hind's Canadian ones in the 1850s marked the beginning. They served notice, if it was needed, that the West would not long remain the exclusive domain of nomadic hunters. Stevens' party, which penetrated into the Cypress Hills area, was looking for a railway route. Palliser's and Hind's, which skirted the northern fringe of the semi-arid zone, were evaluating the prairies as farm land. Assuming that the buffalo would long be an important feature of the area and, in the absence of agricultural techniques able to cope with the semi-arid climate, all dismissed the central zone as uninhabitable. This was the only area, however, which was so classified. Their stamp of approval, for agriculture, was given to most of the plains region surrounding the Wood Mountain country. While farmers did not immediately put these findings to the test, the park area was, in effect, identified beforehand as the last refuge of the buffalo, and of those who depended on the herds.

In the 1860s, the park area began to be just such a refuge. Shrinking numbers of bison, decimation of whole tribes by disease, and open competition with whites led to a fragmentation of old tribal territories on the northwestern plains. The Cree and Assiniboine began to move into and through the park area, towards the southwest, as the Blackfoot made a strategic withdrawal to the west. At the same time, Sioux refugees from Minnesota took up semi-permanent residence. The most important event of the period, however, was the migration of the Métis. The Red River Métis had begun to penetrate the park area on annual hunts in the late 1850s, as it became harder and harger to find buffalo east of the Coteau. By the 1860s the herds had withdrawn even further west, and a change in tactics was required. Thanks in part to the recent advances of their Cree and Assiniboine allies, and in part to their own growing strength, the Métis were able to establish advance outposts in the Wood Mountain country. Suitable locations, changing each year, were used for wintering by bands of hunters. This considerably reduced travelling time. It also increased the distance between the Métis and the white settlers moving into the Red River - particularly desirable after 1870.

The large, seasonal Indian and Métis population in the park area also attracted traders to the area, for the first time. A line of supply to the Missouri was established by independent American traders and another, operated by Métis and French-Canadian traders, linked the area with the Red River settlement in the east. The buffalo hides, meat and furs collected by the hunters were exchanged for domestic goods, metal implements and food and, particularly in the case of the Americans, for whiskey and repeating firearms. By the end of the decade the independent American and Métis traders had been joined by Hudson's Bay Company outposts (also run by Métis) operating out of Qu'Appelle and Ft. Ellice, and by representatives of large American mercantile firms from Ft. Benton. To serve this traffic, a network of semi-permanent cart trails developed in the park area. These linked the sizeable Métis community's favored wintering sites with its southern and eastern sources of supply, and with its western hunting grounds.

The growth of the hunting and trading community in the park area in the 1860s did not signify that the resources of the area had become markedly better or more reliable than they had been before. Rather, it resulted from changing conditions elsewhere on the plains. Local resources had improved in relative rather than absolute terms. A place where buffalo could be found on occasion was better than one where they never were. The Indians and Métis, however, were not the only ones who thought in relative terms. In the 1850s and 1860s the American and Canadian governments alike had been paying increased attention to the empty lands of the West. As the quantity of new land available in the east steadily diminished, the much-maligned "deserts" of the west became more and more attractive. In 1870 the Canadians annexed all of the plains north of the 49th Parallel into their Confederation. Shortly after, on the principle that good fences make good neighbours, the British-Canadian and American governments entered into an agreement to mark the aforementioned International Boundary.

The work of the Boundary Commission of 1873-74 was partly symbolic. In themselves, a few piles of stones meant very little. The commission, however, did not confine itself to markers. In the Wood Mountain country, it led to G.M. Dawson's 1874 survey. This scientist produced a radically new evaluation of the resources of the area, based on the probable disappearance of the buffalo and the imminent construction of a transcontinental railway through the prairie West. Given these developments, Dawson proposed that the Wood Mountain country was bound to become a magnet for (white) ranchers and, probably, for (white) farmers. This "official" change in the classification of the park area, from desert to developable real estate, did not auger well for the future prosperity of its Indian and Métis inhabitants. The border-marking activities of the Boundary Commission (and their logistic network) were also important in setting the stage for the operations of the North West Mounted Police.

The Mounted Police first came to Wood Mountain in 1874, stopping off on the long march west, and pausing to set up a winter outpost when part of the force returned east in the fall. This was the beginning of 44 years of near-continuous use of the Wood Mountain post by the police. In the short term it marked the start of a decade of hectic activity, in which the North West Mounted Police made a reputation for themselves as one of the most effective law enforcement agencies in the world. Wood Mountain played a central part in this. The North West Mounted Police were formed in order to establish Canadian sovereignty in the new Northwest Territories in the least expensive way possible. Military organization and armament notwithstanding, it was principally a police force, and its primary task was to prevent frontier unrest of any kind. It did so by a rigorous and impartial application of the spirit - and, when necessary, the letter - of the law for Indians, Métis and whites alike. The force was given an unprecedented array of police powers, supplemented by judicial and governmental responsibilities, for this purpose and it was an unqualified success.

In their first decade, from 1874 to 1883, the border line from the Missouri Coteau to the Rockies was the focus of police interests. To begin with, the whiskey trade across the international boundary was brought to an end. Liquor brought with it theft, violence and agitation, and was therefore an anathema in police eyes. Their method of operation was to stop trouble before it started before it grew to a point where the small force could not deal with it. In 1875, the whiskey trade in the area having been suppressed, the Wood Mountain post was vacated in favour of a larger post in the Cypress Hills, and the park area was patrolled from Ft. Walsh; however, just a year later it was necessary for the police to move back in force.

In 1874 the buffalo herds had left the drought-stricken Wood Mountain area in favour of the Milk River and were followed by the greater part of the local Métis community. When conditions improved in 1876, the buffalo began to return, and were again accompanied by the Métis. On their return, however, the Métis found some unwelcome neighbours. In the early 1870s friction between the Teton Sioux and American settlers, miners and railway builders had begun to grow, as the whites began to trespass on lands formally ceded to the Sioux. By 1876 this friction had turned into open warfare between the Indians and the United States Army. Thanks to several exceptional leaders, including Sitting Bull, the Sioux and their allies were able to trounce the expeditionary force sent against them but the summer victories at the Rosebud and Little Big Horn rivers led the Sioux into a fall and winter of constant skirmishing, and retreat before the reinforced army. It was a contest that the Sioux could not hope to win and, eventually, many began to head for the sanctuary of British territory. In November of 1876 the first Teton Sioux entered the Wood Mountain country, to be followed the next spring by Sitting Bull and the balance of the refugees.

The Sioux occupation of 1876-81 was a remarkably peaceful affair. This was partly due to the skillful management of the police, and partly to the uncompromising attitude of the United States government - the latter serving to convince Sioux leaders that genocide was a distinct possibility, should they decide to return to the United States on American terms. Until 1879 there was little to suggest that the Sioux would even surrender. Enough game was available in the park area to keep them supplied and, therefore peaceful. While they were peaceful the Canadian government would not consider trying to evict them by force. In the latter year, however, the situation changed. By accident or (probably) design, the already overhunted buffalo herds did not come north across the line in the spring, and Sioux attempting to hunt in the United States were driven back into Canada. Starvation and disease struck the Indians in the winter of 1879-80 and many left during the ensuing summer. The next winter was even worse, and in the spring of 1881 Sitting Bull and all but a few of his remaining followers surrendered at Ft. Benton.

The Sioux were not the only ones affected by the disappearance of the buffalo. The event marked the end of an era in the park area. In 1879 more than half of the Métis community departed for other locations in the United States and Canada and the following year those remaining moved east to a permanent new settlement at Willow Bunch. In a short time the last stray buffalo had been hunted down, and the Métis turned first, to manual labour and buffalo-bone collection and, later, to ranching. Similarly, the Cree and Assiniboine, who returned to the border country after the Sioux had departed, were unable to find enough game. By 1883 all had been relocated by the Canadian government on permanent reservations in the north and east. In the same year, the border country being more or less empty, the police posts at both Wood Mountain and Ft. Walsh were abandoned. With their closure, the few American traders still lingering at Wood Mountain departed.

The other side of the coin to the demise of the buffalo was the arrival of the Canadian Pacific Railway in the southwest. The first event ended an old way of life; the second brought a new one to replace it. The railway brought the West solidly into the economic and political orbit of eastern Canada, and sparked a settlement rush of enormous proportions. With its construction, the first phase in the development of the North West Mounted Police was ended. The "sovereignty patrol" of 1874-83 was eminently successful, but the police had no time to rest on their laurels. The new settlements appearing in the north and east of the territories had to be controlled and protected.

No sooner had the Sioux left the park area than Dominion land surveyors arrived to map and subdivide it. A flood of settlers similar to that taking place elsewhere was anticipated. In the late 1870s several investigators - notably John Macoun and Superintendent J.M. Walsh - had expressed their opinion that the Wood Mountain country was suitable for both farming and ranching. These appraisals were apparently taken seriously, for the act of surveying was itself a prerequisite for agricultural settlement. The surveyors, however, taking the closest look to date at the resources of the area, began to raise doubts. In 1883 O.J. Klotz of the Dominion Lands Branch pointed out that it would be difficult to farm without irrigation, and that the terrain and water supplies of the park area were unsuited to such improvements. Klotz suggested that it be left, for the time being, to ranchers. Since his proposal coincided with the collapse of the 1881-83 "boom" in settlement, it was accepted, and surveying was brought to a halt.

Although farmers did not move into the park area in the 1880s the police nonetheless returned to protect settlement. The location of the Wood Mountain post made it an excellent point from which to patrol the eastern half of the boundary - the plan being to set up a well-guarded line between the settled areas in the north and east and the border, which would deny passage to would-be outlaws and escaping ones. The re-establishment of the post was planned in 1884, and took place in 1885 under the spur of the rebellion. In short order a telegraph line was built from Wood Mountain to Moose Jaw, and an *ad hoc* border patrol of loyal Willow Bunch Métis was formed. This was soon reinforced by North West Mounted Police drafts. The events of 1885 amply demonstrated the strategic necessity for a continuing police presence at Wood Mountain.

The year after the rebellion witnessed the beginning of the ranching era in the park area. At this time a large American cattle company moved in part of its operation and the systematic police border patrol network designed by Commissioner L.W. Herchmer went into operation. The ranch went out of business the next year, after a severe winter, but the latter grew and improved. Constant summer patrols covered the main trails and the boundary line, while the Wood Mountain post was moved to better ground and expanded in size. The security offered by the patrol system encouraged a number of people to start small ranches in the Wood Mountain district, many of whom were police veterans or ex-employees of the force. By 1895 a thriving small ranch community had developed. Although other demands on police manpower forced a cutback in patrols at this time, the moral effect of the patrol system was unaffected. Crime remained virtually nonexistent, and the ranching industry continued to grow.

The type of ranching which appeared at Wood Mountain in the 1890s was very well adapted to the area. The many small, well-managed ranches shared a huge range, with no fear of overcrowding, and both investments and production costs were low. This idyllic situation began to change soon after the turn of the century. As homesteaders crowded onto the best range in Alberta, Montana and North Dakota, ranchers began to cast a speculative eye on the Wood Mountain area. Then, in 1902, several large ex-American ranches moved into the park area, including the Turkey Track, east of the Frenchman, and the T-Bar Down, southwest of it. Strays from the N-N and Circle Diamond ranches across the border, and from the "76" and other ranches near the Cypress Hills also began to 'wander' in with increasing frequency. By 1906 there were about 40,000 cattle in the area, with more expected in the near future. In response to this, police patrols were reinforced. The influx of stray American cattle, carrying mange and other diseases, was halted and a minor outbreak of rustling was curbed; however, these were not the major problems facing the ranching industry in the park area.

The philosophy of the large cattle company ranches was quite simple: the more cattle put out to fend for themselves on the free grass, the higher the profits. They gambled that their losses from winter storms and other hazards would not exceed a bearable level. Herds were accordingly built up by importing unacclimatized livestock from Ontario, Manitoba and the United States. Although certain sections of the range were saved for winter use, it could not be expected that the Turkey Track, for an example, could provide enough reserve winter feed for more than 20,000 head. This combination of "green" cattle and low feed reserves proved disastrous in 1906-7. After a long winter of constant blizzards, below-zero temperatures, and short chinooks which covered the range in a coat of ice, less than a third of the large ranches' stock remained alive in the spring. Deeply in debt, all of the major cattle companies went out of business shortly thereafter. The lesson was clear: indiscriminate and intensive use of the park area's resources put the user at the mercy of its harsh and unreliable climate.

The losses suffered by the small ranchers around Wood Mountain in 1906-7 were not nearly as high as those of the large ranchers, and the small ranch industry quickly expanded to fill the vacuum left after 1907. New ranches appeared along the lower Frenchman valley and south of Wood Mountain. These developments, however, went hand in hand with the intrusion and expansion of agricultural settlement in the area after 1908. Due to the different economic character of ranching, and the heavy political bias in favour of farming, ranchers were placed at a severe disadvantage in the ensuing competition for land. They resorted to grazing leases to secure their range, to political activism to redress the political imbalance, and to outright withdrawal into the least hospitable sections of the Wood Mountain plateau to escape the menace. But by the 1920s, their battle for independence had largely been lost, as the cancellation of the huge Seventy Mile Ranch lease (near Val Marie) in 1926 showed. And no sooner had a state of wary equilibrium been reached than the drought and depression of the 1930s arrived. After 1937 in their common search for ways of survival and reconstruction, the ranching industry gradually merged into the agricultural one - a process which continues to this day.

The Dominion Lands Act of 1908 caused changes of unparalleled magnitude in the park area. When the 'buffalo frontier' gave way to the ranching frontier in the early 1880s, the transfer was significant in its details, rather than its scope. The cattle replaced the buffalo, and a small permanent community of ranchers replaced the small semi-permanent communities of the Indians and Métis. The differences between the ranching and agricultural frontiers, however, were so great as to make a comparison between the two almost impossible. The intensive settlement, permanent communication routes and institutions, and intensive cultivation which characterized the latter constituted a comprehensive transformation from the pre-1908 situation. Yet, at the same time, one element of similarity remained. Like large-scale ranching before it, agriculture was a 'foreign' transplant in the park area. Sooner or later it would have to experience, and cope with, the extreme climatic fluctuations which typify the Grasslands environment.

The Grasslands Area and Agriculture

The Grasslands area was one of Canada's last agricultural frontiers. Its harsh climate and marginally productive soils discouraged farm settlement until the first decade of the 20th century when farmland of any description was in short supply in western Canada. The Dominion Lands Act of 1908 opened to settlement almost every quarter section within the area, despite available information which suggested that large tracts were suitable only for cattle grazing. Because of the Dominion government's warped judgment, local farmers and all levels of government would spend the next half-century seeking to overcome the physical limitations of the area.

People of diverse origins responded to the legislation of 1908. The Anglo-Saxon majority, mostly Ontario-born, was geographically most dispersed. The French, usually Quebecois, but including some Europeans, settled in an east-west line with Gravelbourg as the midpoint of settlement. The Val Marie district, in the southwestern corner of the of the area, was another French enclave. Roumanians and Scandinavians were scattered northward from the southeastern flank of Wood Mountain. The German population, small in size, appears to have been as dispersed as the Anglo-Saxons.

They emigrated for a variety of reasons. The Anglo-Saxons and the French were driven by a lack of occupational opportunities in their home provinces. Eastern Europeans came for many reasons including land shortages, religious intolerance, lack of job opportunities, aversion to military service, and so on. The Scandinavians and Germans, who usually immigrated from the United States, were seeking cheaper land. But regardless of their reasons for coming, all chose to settle in Grasslands because they wished to farm.

Since the Grasslands area was small and the demand for land large, a rush for homestead took place each spring until all the available land was claimed. This compelled prospective homesteaders to choose their land hurriedly and often indiscriminantly. In general, those who arrived earliest acquired the best land. There were even a desperate few who filed 'blind', meaning that they filed a claim on land they had never seen. Most claims were filed at the Moose Jaw Land Titles Office.

Once a homestead quarter was secured, the settler had to establish a physical presence in order to fulfill his obligations under the 1908

Act. A fireguard, later to be the garden plot, was immediately ploughed around the proposed building site, and construction of a shelter began. The first house was almost always a sod shanty as the lack of trees made structural variation a virtual impossibility. This shanty consisted of four sod walls and a roof of poles and sod. The inside walls were chinked with mud to prevent draughts and the floor was usually dirt. Windows were something of a luxury. Makeshift partitions divided the interior into 'rooms' and each was furnished with the few possessions that the settler had freighted to the site in his wagon or hayrack. Apart from necessities like a stove and kitchen utensils, most furnishings were improvised. The crude shelter and meagre furnishings sufficed until the homestead began to generate income several years later. By 1915 the sod shanty was a thing of the past. Various outbuildings were constructed over the years, always according to the settler's needs and means.

Agricultural progress was slow because of the labour-intensive nature of pioneer farming. When the frost was out of the ground, the settler began ploughing operations, usually with a moldboard plough and a team of oxen. With this simple piece of equipment and slow-paced oxen, only two and a half or three acres could be broken each day. The first crops were sown in the second spring. Flax was most often seeded because it grew well on newly broken land and fetched a good price. Relatively large quantities of oats were grown as feed for livestock. Wheat was not extensively sown because of the difficulties encountered in marketing it. Harvesting methods ranged from rubbing the heads of grain between one's palms to custom threshing with a steam engine and threshing machine.

Crop yields were most affected by weather conditions. Frost and hail were not serious problems, but inadequate precipitation was always a threat. After a fine crop in 1909, which assured the settlers of the feasibility of agriculture in Grasslands, came the first of many droughts. Farmers were obliged to seek employment elsewhere that winter to supplement their farm incomes and some accepted relief seed grain from the Dominion government. A period of prosperity followed and was crowned in 1915 by a bumper crop of wheat. Wheat had, by this time, become the main crop of the area. Expansion and mechanization of farm operations took place, while sod houses were exchanged for ones of frame construction and oxen for horses. The easy credit of the time facilitated these developments. But in 1917 drought conditions returned and did not abate for four years. During much of this period a serious economic depression prevailed. The remaining cash reserves of 1915 evaporated and creditors knocked on every farmer's door.

The problem of drought was compounded by contemporary cultural practices. American immigrants, commonly hailed as disseminators of proper dryland farming techniques, appear to have been as uninformed as other settlers. Most settlers had never experienced severe drought conditions and consequently utilized traditional cultural practices. Their moldboard ploughs, so reasonably priced and so well suited to breaking the tough prairie sod, actually worsened the problem by leaving the soil inverted and the weeds and other trash cover buried. In time of drought, the soil crumbled and was blown across thousands of acres of treeless, weedless prairie. Ironically, the 1915 bumper crop, which should have stabilized Grasslands agriculture to some extent, exacerbated the soil drifting problem by encouraging farmers to bring even more acreage under cultivation.

Further aggravating the plight of Grasslands farmers was the lack of marketing facilities. Only one railway had been built through the area, the Assiniboia-Shaunavon line, and this served only the most populated, most productive districts of the north. Many local farmers had no recourse but to haul their grain 25 to 50 miles if they wished to market it. No other railway branch lines were built because officials of the Canadian Pacific and the Canadian National realized what the government apparently did not - that certain districts of the Grasslands area could not grow grain on a continually profitable basis. This policy, while based on sound business principles, retarded agricultural development in the Grasslands area because high transportation costs sapped even more of the farmers' meagre disposable incomes.

Marketing problems first elicited a formal response from local farmers some five years after the initial wave of settlement. Locals of agrarian protest organizations were formed and these served as forums in which dissatisfied farmers could air their common grievances and attempt to formulate workable alternatives to the existing system of grain handling and marketing. By the early 1920s widespread economic distress had severely restricted the activities of such groups. To deal exclusively with the issue of railway branch lines, a widely endorsed lobby group called the Southwestern Saskatchewan Railway Association was formed in 1915. Despite repeated appeals to railway companies and all levels of government, it seems to have been ineffectual.

The Dominion government and its provincial counterpart were always sympathetic to the predicament of the Grasslands' population. Realizing that relief cheques and seed grain were merely palliatives, they jointly participated in a Better Farming Conference in 1920 to find long-term solutions to the problems of the dry belt. The most important result of the conference was the establishment of an experimental research station at Swift Current with a mandate to develop better dryland farming techniques. Significant advances were made, particularly with respect to new types of machinery and cultivation practices, and some modification of Grasslands agriculture was achieved.

The instability of the local economy contrasted sharply with the permanence of the institutions which had been established in the first decade of agrarian settlement. In every rural district and in each of the villages and towns which arose along the Assiniboia-Shaunavon line, school districts and church parishes multiplied annually - reflections of the settlers' intellectual baggage. By 1913 the entire area had received local government institutions, probably at the insistence of the provincial government. The northern districts were organized into eight rural municipalities while the more sparsely populated southern farmlands formed two large local improvement districts. Corresponding local governments were set up in many villages and towns. In good years these institutions signified material prosperity; in bad years they constituted an unmanageable financial burden.

Five consecutive years of prosperity followed the end of the post-war depression in 1924. Increased purchasing power and bountiful crop yields allowed farmers to accumulate capital at an unprecedented rate. These cash reserves, together with easily obtainable loan capital, were used to further mechanize farm operations and expand cultivated acreages. Buoyant world markets encouraged the cultivation of more wheat and the Grasslands economy became ever more dependent on the export of one staple.

The high volumes of grain being produced in most districts induced the Canadian Pacific Railway to expand its services in the area. Still, a great deal of caution seems to have been exercised in selecting the branch line's route, probably in anticipation of another drought. A line was constructed from Assiniboia to Mankota along a zig-zag course through districts known for their general productivity. At the same time elevator facilities along the Assiniboia-Shaunavon line were expanded.

Local service centres, always sensitive to changes in the area's agricultural economy, underwent a brief boom in the 1920s. The business opportunities afforded by a stabilized local economy resulted in a 30 per cent rise in the total urban population between 1921 and 1931. The distribution of this increase was dependent upon the productivity of each centre's hinterland. Thus the greatest increases were recorded in the northern districts along the Assiniboia-Shaunavon line, while the less spectacular but still substantial increases came along the Canadian Pacific Railway's line between Assiniboia and Mankota. Assiniboia, not unexpectedly, emerged as the principal sub-metropole for the Grasslands area.

Increased retail trade and more residents magnified the tax base of most service centres. The additional revenues were largely channelled into civic improvements. In many centres new educational facilities were built or old ones upgraded. Concrete sidewalks replaced wooden ones. Curling rinks were built and became the focus of each town's recreational activities. Electrification and telephonic service became the order of the day. In at least one centre, Assiniboia, a union hospital was established. The extent of the civic improvements varied with the size of the centre. Private investment burgeoned as well, as new stores were opened and newspapers founded. The degree of optimism was so great that one investor even tried to establish a local radio broadcasting station. Its failure clearly demonstrated the limitations to growth in the Grasslands area.

The boom was short-lived. After a bumper crop of wheat in 1928, unfavorable climatic conditions returned and the crop of 1929 was short. One month later the panic on Wall Street precipitated a worldwide economic collapse. In each succeeding year for nearly a decade, low prices or low yields, or both, denied local farmers a reasonable rate of return on their investment. The cash reserves which had been accumulated during the last half of the 1920s were quickly depleted as farmers continued to meet their debt obligations. Once the reserves were exhausted, probably within a year or two of the onset of the Depression, deterioration of every farmstead and household followed. Farm machinery simply wore out and could not be repaired nor replaced. Buildings became dilapidated. Cardboard replaced broken window panes. Automobiles were converted into 'Bennett buggies.' Clothes were patched with already-patched clothes. The longer the Depression lingered, the worse the destitution became. Some farmers reacted by abandoning their homesteads; the vast majority chose to wait out the Depression.

In the towns conditions were no better. The rapidly shrinking market drove merchant after merchant further into debt. Increasing competition from mail-order houses, chain stores, and farmers' co-operatives cut business revenues even more. Bankruptcy followed in many cases and a small exodus began; between 1931 and 1941 the urban population declined by over five per cent. The smallest service centres were hit hardest and many simply ceased to exist. Intermediate-sized centres were fortunate to remain stable. The largest centres, having the largest and wealthiest clienteles, were best able to weather the Depression.

It was during the Depression that the extravagance of local institutions became apparent. Local government units could not meet their financial obligations nor maintain commonplace services. Schools were closed for lack of fuel and teachers went without pay. Tumbledown bridges could not be repaired. Road-grading operations had to be curtailed. Local government officials received no remuneration for their services. Taxes were still levied but few could be collected. Only intervention by the Dominion and provincial governments saved the Grasslands area from complete economic prostration.

Three basic types of relief were provided during the Depression. The first was direct relief, which consisted principally of subsistence commodities such as food, clothing and fuel. Wherever possible direct relief supplies were bought from local merchants in an attempt to stabilize small businesses. A second type of relief was termed agricultural assistance, which was designed to keep farmers in production. Vast quantities of seed grain were distributed and feed and fodder were made available for livestock. And finally, an alternate form of employment was offered by the Department of Highways through roadwork schemes. These relief services were administered by the Saskatchewan Relief Commission from 1931 to 1934, and thereafter by various government departments. Additional forms of relief were provided as required. Voluntary agencies such as the Saskatchewan Voluntary Relief Committee and the Red Cross assisted as well. Between 1929 and 1939 relief services worth almost twelve million dollars were provided to residents of the Grasslands area.

Exhaustion of cash reserves and abnormal prices and yields forced most Grasslands farmers to default on their debt payments. The governments regarded this as a serious threat to the productivity of the agricultural sector and consequently enacted legislation which radically altered contemporary creditor-debtor relations. Saskatchewan's most significant contributions were the Debt Adjustment Act and the Limitation of Civil Rights Act, both passed in 1933. In essence, these acts did nothing more than postpone the collection of debts. The Dominion government's Farmer's Creditors Arrangement Act of 1934 was more beneficial because it provided for compulsory debt adjustment. Generally speaking, creditors obtained a cash settlement which could be reinvested and farmers retired their indebtedness without being forced to abandon their farms. The widespread need for working capital was satisfied through the Canadian Farm Loan Amendment Act of 1934. And finally, in 1936 the new Saskatchewan government reached agreement with the Dominion Mortgage and Investments Association on a scheme which greatly scaled down many of the farmers' outstanding debts. These acts did not eliminate indebtedness, but they did have an ameliorative effect.

It was not until 1935 that the Dominion government introduced legislation dealing with the rehabilitation of western agriculture. The provisions of the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act demonstrate that its farmers perceived the problems of agriculture in very narrow terms. The act did little more than extend the original mandate of the Swift Current Experimental Research Station. Bolstered by a massive injection of capital for research, the station was able to develop and teach improved dryland cultural practices. In addition, water conservation and irrigation projects, both large and small, were successfully implemented. Only in 1937 did the government attempt to deal with the problem in terms of resource utilization. By reclaiming severely eroded land and converting it into community pastures, the government tried to effect a diversification of agriculture in drought-prone areas like Grasslands. Theoretically this should have stabilized the local economy to some degree, but the government failed to consider the burden which extensive capital and labor transfers imposed on a traditionally grain-producing, deeply indebted population. As a result, little diversification took place in the Grasslands area.

The early 1940s were not dissimilar to the depression years in Grasslands. Low grain prices and several short crops prevented local farmers from retiring outstanding debts. The problem was exacerbated when they borrowed additional credit against a bountiful crop in 1942 and enlarged and mechanized their farm operations. Consequently, even more government aid was needed. Between 1939 and 1946 close to one hundred thousand dollars in direct relief and roadwork wages were pumped into the area. Under the provisions of the Prairie Farm Assistance Act (1939), which worked as a form of insurance against depressed prices and low yields, local farmers were awarded nearly two million dollars in the period 1939 to 1946. While these awards were needed, they had the unfortunate effect of keeping much marginal and submarginal land in production.

During the war years the Dominion government found it necessary and desirable to again attempt a diversification of prairie agriculture. A bonus for wheat acreage reductions was offered as an incentive. Grasslands farmers initially reacted positively and transferred some capital to livestock production but by the war's end a reversal of this trend was underway. Throughout the 1950s the trend to wheat production accelerated due to a buoyant world market for farm produce. At the same time increased occupational opportunities in large urban centres drained the area of much of its farm population, permitting a consolidation of farm holdings. High prices and more cost-efficient operations stabilized the Grasslands economy.

Local service centres did not share equally in the new prosperity. The smallest centres suffered most from rural depopulation and the loss of their youths to the cities. Increased mobility among the farmers, together with changing expectations, led many to forsake their nearest village or town for a larger centre offering more competitive prices and greater variety. Government closure of local offices and school consolidation policies further reduced local tax revenues in many small centres. The result has been a centralization of population and services.

After a half-century of searching, the Dominion government failed to find the key to stability in the Grasslands area. This is not a criticism of the agricultural research programs which have benefitted each generation of local farmers. Nor is it a disparagement of government-funded water conservation and irrigation projects which have diversified hundreds of local farms. It is, however, an indictment of those government officials of 1908 who permitted tens of thousands of acres of prime grazing land to be put under the plough. Furthermore, it is a denunciation of the successors to those officials who could not grasp that only through economies of scale could farming be at all successful in a marginally productive area like Grasslands. Had World War II never happened, the area might still be chronically unstable.

PART II BUFFALO AND CATTLE

CHAPTER I THE PARK AREA

Introduction

In order to put the proposed Grasslands National Park in a proper historical context, the development of a larger area must be dealt with. Very little of specific historical interest has occurred within the 104.5 square miles of badlands, coulees and river valley making up the proposed park. On the contrary, the land was selected because it has largely been bypassed, in the development of the last century. As a living example of the original environment of the region, its anomalous survival is therefore its distinguishing characteristic. It is necessary to look beyond the borders of the park itself to appreciate and explain this. Selecting an appropriate study-area, however, is a problem in itself.

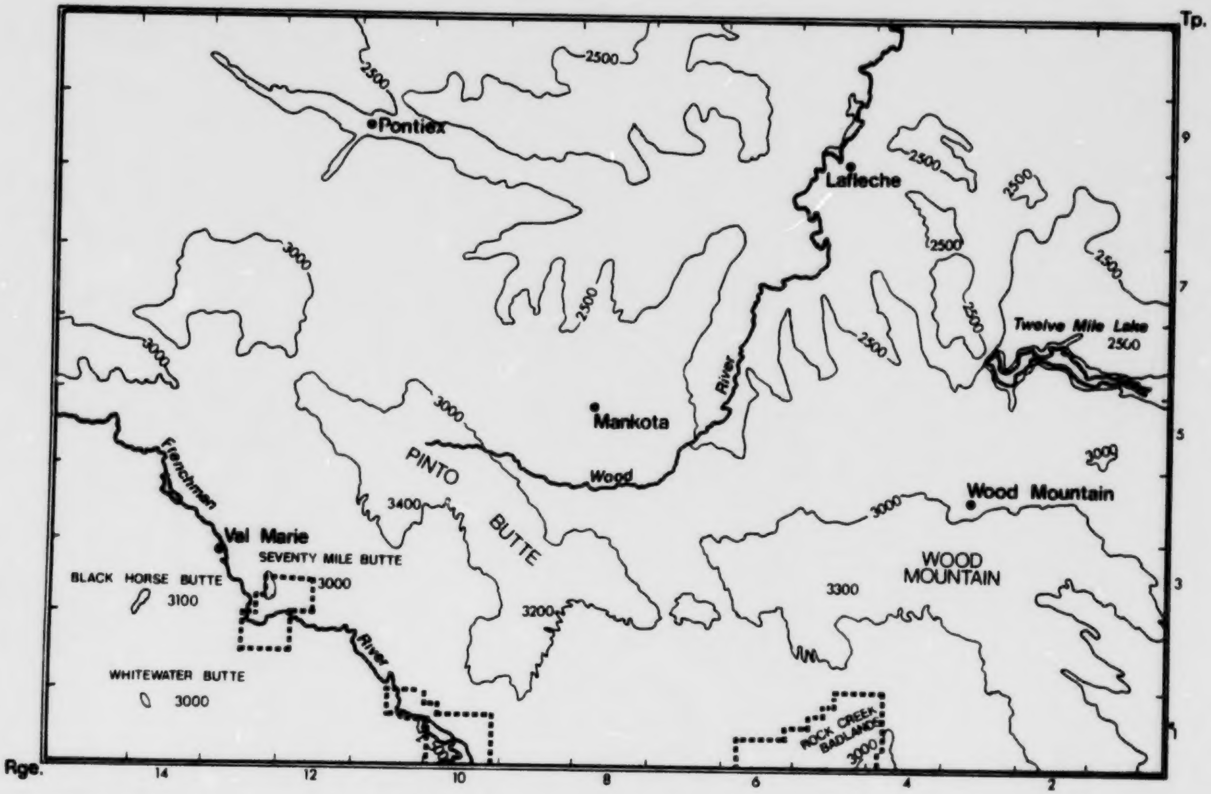
The definition of a discrete unit of study in this region is singularly difficult. For the most part, there is a shortage of clear-cut natural boundaries. To the east and northeast (albeit at some distance) the Missouri Coteau zone provides a rough dividing line. To the north, south and west, however, open plains run all the way to the South Saskatchewan and Missouri River valleys and Cypress Hills, respectively. The entire block within these features has been treated by historians as one natural unit. Paul Sharp, for example, labelled it part of "Whoop-Up Country," while J.G. Nelson termed it the "Cypress Hills area."[1] These are essentially the same in extent - the northwestern Great Plains - and in purpose - to obviate the need to draw precise borders where none in fact exist. The latter approach is certainly valid, and even commendable in that it attempts to avoid the biases inherent in such arbitrary divisions, but it does not help a great deal in defining a "park area" suitable for historical study.

Since no ready-made study-area can be found through a regional approach, it is necessary to resort to the local level for a definition; and to the early historic period, when the first recorded names were being applied therein. This involves its own set of problems. The dominant topographical feature in the vicinity of the park is the Wood Mountain plateau. Historically, however, it is difficult to determine the outlines of this 'plateau area'. In a broad sense, it stretches from the Coteau west to Pinto Butte, and further. G.M. Dawson, in 1875, recognized this problem of terminology. "The name Wood, or Woody Mountain" he noted, "is sometimes used to designate the whole, or an indefinite part, of the Tertiary watershed plateau." He preferred to restrict it to "the half-breed settlement [tp. 4-3 W3], and its immediate vicinity."[2] This was in accord with the general usage of the local Métis, the phrase "Le Montagne de Bois" referring to the area between and around their wintering locations at Wood Mountain and Willow Bunch.[3] In both of these cases, "Wood Mountain" was the title given to those parts of the plateau where wood was available, and not to the plateau as such.

The generic "Wood Mountain," often applied to the area as a whole, is properly used to describe only one of the districts in the vicinity of the park. A number of other local districts also received separate names in the early historic period. One of these was Pinto, or Pinto Horse Butte - a high, detached section of the plateau west and slightly north of Wood Mountain proper. This name (La Butte du Cheval Caille) was apparently applied quite early. One local historian attributes it to an Indian legend, of the usual foggy antecedents.[4] Another district which received its name at an early date was the distinctive badland section south of Wood Mountain settlement. This was referred to as the "Rocky Creek" badlands by early tourists such as Dawson. Rock, or Rocky Creek is a tributary of the Frenchman River. It appears, however, that the older name also encompassed the stream now known as Morgan Creek, and several others which are tributaries of the Rock.[5] Ambiguous terminology seems to be a feature of the region. In the case of the Frenchman River a somewhat confusing selection of alternate titles is the problem. The Frenchman runs in a deep valley along the southwestern flank of Pinto Butte. It has been known, variously and interchangeably, as "La Rivière-Blanche," "La Maison de Terre,"[6] the "White Earth," the "White Mud" or "Whitemud" Creek or River, and the Frenchman Creek or River.[7] The confusion apparently began early, since Dawson mapped it as "Whitemud River or Frenchman's Creek" in 1875.[8] The crossings on the river, which provided wintering sites for Métis hunters at an early date, received their own separate names. Those at Fifty Mile and Seventy Mile (the present site of Val Marie) were named for their locations on the long trail between Wood Mountain settlement and the Cypress Hills.[9]

One other district in the vicinity of the park to receive a separate name was the glacial lake plain to the north of the plateau. Before the arrival of agricultural settlers in 1908 this was accurately, if unimaginatively referred to by the various explorers and traders as "the plain" (occasionally varied to the 'Buffalo' or 'dry' plain): when they referred to it at all. It was pragmatically treated as a good place to be leaving, due to the lack of water and, on occasion, grass. The aforementioned settlers, however, named it the Wood River district after the streams flowing off the plateau. Once again, alternate titles were available, the main creek having been known at different times before 1908 as "Rivière la Vielle," "Wood Mountain Creek," and the "East Branch of Old Wives Creek" (the present Notukeu Creek being its West Branch).[10]

These early names, many of which are still in use, help to delineate an historical study-area for the park. The districts which they relate to correspond with the main physiographic zones in its vicinity, the distribution of which played an important role in determining later patterns of settlement and land use. Each therefore had a part in the developments which make up the historical background of the park. Bearing this in mind, it is possible to distinguish a useful contextual unit of study, which will hereafter be referred to as the "park area." This is bounded on the east and west by 106°W. and 108°W. longitude, respectively. To the south and north, 40°N. and 40°50'N. latitude mark its limits, the former being the boundary with the United States. In terms of the land survey system, the area can be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3000
Mankota
Wood
River
Wood Mountain
WOOD MOUNTAIN
3300
PINTO
BUTTE
3400
3200
Frenchman
Val Marie
SEVENTY MILE BUTTE
BLACK HORSE BUTTE
3100
WHITEWATER BUTTE
ROCK CREEK BADLANDS
1/2"=1mi.

CONTOUR INTERVAL

FIG. 2 Park Area: Topography

described as townships 1 to 10, ranges 1 to 15 west of the Third Meridian (W3), 106°W. being the meridian. From this line the vertical ranges of townships are numbered westwards. From the border (49°N.) the horizontal rows of townships are numbered northwards (see Fig. 2). In total, some 194,400 square miles are included.

This study-area takes in all of the aforementioned districts. This means that the major physiographic and cultural features with an evident historical relationship to the park are included. Furthermore, it is an area small enough that a fairly comprehensive inventory and examination of its historical resources is possible, but at the same time is large enough to provide the scope for a flexible and comparative approach as and when necessary. While the borders chosen are necessarily arbitrary, to some degree, the internal composition of the area gives some assurance that they are not meaningless.

Land and Resources

An examination of the physiography, climate and vegetation of the park area is a necessary prelude to one of its human history. These three elements, together, have dictated the type and quantity of the natural resources available for exploitation and, to a significant extent, the uses to which they could be put. Although the resources themselves have altered somewhat over time and with use, as have conceptions of their quality and quantity, the basic elements of the natural environment have imposed certain relative and absolute limitations to their use by man. These limitations have not always been understood or, where understood, acknowledged.

Geology

The park area lies on the Alberta plateau, the "Third Prairie Steppe" of the European explorers. In western and southwestern Saskatchewan, this consists of the elevated area to the west of the broken escarpment of the Missouri Coteau. Rather ironically, given its present climate, the principal factor in the geologic history of the park area has always been water. Erosion and deposition by seas, rivers, lakes and glacial ice have created the modern landscape.

The evolution of the present bedrock surface (that underlying the more recent glacial and proglacial deposits) began about 90 or 100 million years ago, as the last of the inland oceans began to recede. In the next 40-odd million years some 7500 to 8000 feet of sedimentary rocks of the Upper Cretaceous epoch were deposited in the park area. Generally speaking, these consisted of interleaved formations of marine and freshwater depositions, with terrestrial and aquatic ones gradually becoming the most important (although the marine "Bearpaw" formation is the uppermost one in the greater part of the park area). Various types of shales, clays and sandstones comprised the bulk of the material, with the occasional fossilized dinosaur skeleton added at later stages. These bedrock components are still important in that the salinity of the earlier formations affects water quality in the area, and their relative softness has led to some spectacular erosion in the river valleys and badlands.[11]

The next step in the evolutionary process began about 60 million years ago. During this stage eroded, river-carried materials from the new Rocky Mountains provided much of the material deposited. This only seems fair, since these same mountains also cut off the moisture-bearing winds from the Pacific, creating a semi-arid climate.[12] In the first phase of this period, represented by the Paleocene "Ravenscrag" formation, up to 600 feet of sandstone and shale interspersed with thin seams of low-grade lignite coal were laid down. The eroded remains of these deposits lie over the southern and southeastern parts of the park area, making up the foundation of the Wood Mountain-Pinto Butte plateau. In the next, and last, phase of bedrock deposition large quantities of coarse gravel and sand were laid down. This, represented by the Miocene "Wood Mountain" formation, caps the Wood Mountain plateau in depths of up to 90 feet. This Tertiary formation is a rich source of fossilized mammalian remains, including mammoths, horses and sundry other species.

A visitor to the late Miocene epoch, a million years or so ago, would probably have been able to recognize the basic outlines of the modern landscape without a great deal of difficulty. The flat Wood Mountain plateau was in place, a little larger and less battered than at present, and low plains ran away from it to the north and south. The broad, gently sloped valleys of the Miocene drainage system occupied roughly the same positions as the present ones. The contours of the modern landscape, in other words, are largely controlled by those of the ancient bedrock surface below it. The subsequent Pleistocene glaciation did, however, result in important physiographic alterations, plus a general face-lift.[13]

Glacial History

Glacial ice had both direct and indirect effects on the surface of the park area. The first consisted of alterations caused by the ice sheet itself, which bulldozed materials in front of it while advancing. This resulted in "end-moraines" at the advanced edges of the sheets. Also, materials trapped in the ice were deposited directly on the surface when melting occurred in place, resulting in "ground moraine," "hummocky moraine" and "glacial till" (boulder clay) deposits.

The indirect effects consisted of changes wrought by the "meltwater" released during glacial retreats. This resulted in deep channels cut by torrents of water, and in large lakes of meltwater which deposited thick, stratified beds of sediment.[14]

The sequence and effects of glacial action in the park area have been thoroughly described in a recent geological study.[15] Naturally, it deals with the terminal period, since the ice itself obliterated evidence concerning initial advances and the long occupation. S.H. Whitaker presents this as five distinct stages of advance and retreat. In the first phase, the whole of the area was covered by ice, with the exception of a portion in the southeast corner. The ice then retreated northwards to the crest of the plateau, leaving a stagnant ice area in the southwest, and opening up the Frenchman meltwater channel. The latter principally drained the Cypress Hills area, but also came from the Wood Mountain ice-front by the newly cut

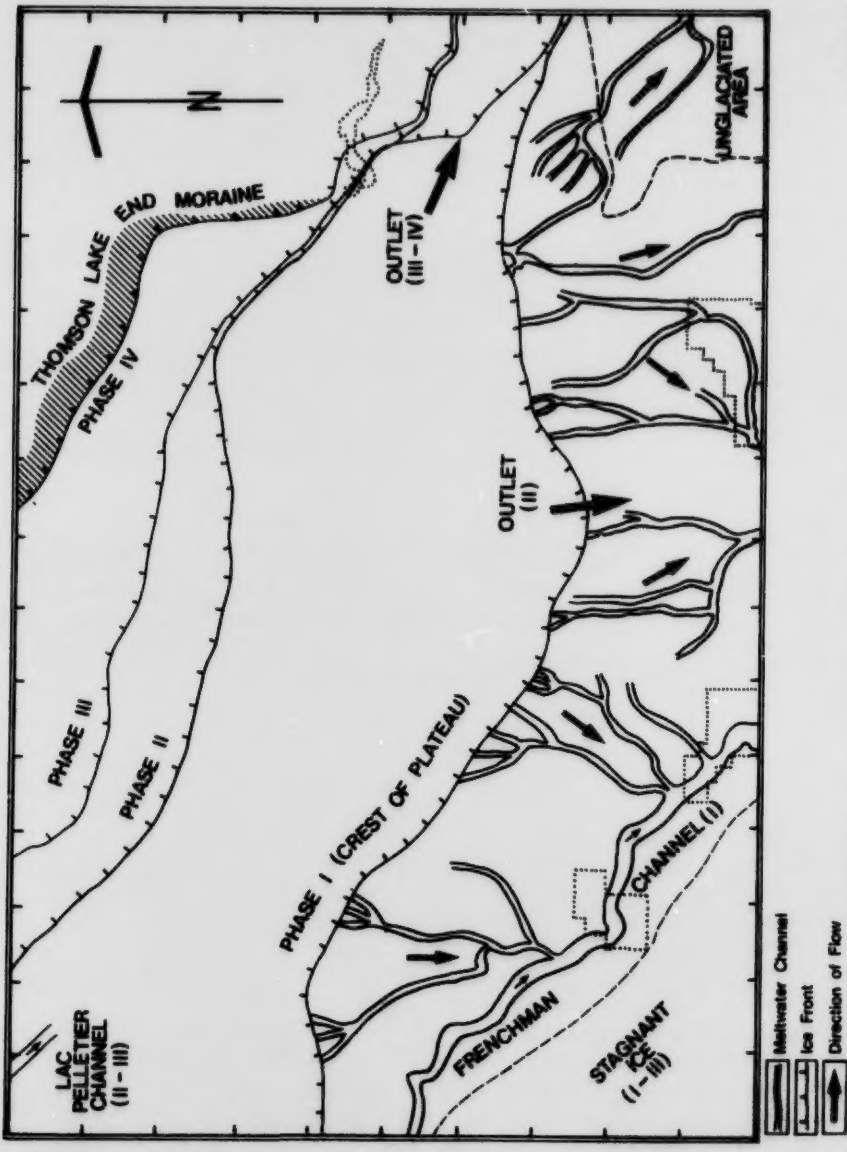

LAC PELLETIER CHANNEL (II - III)
PHASE III
PHASE II
PHASE I (CREST OF PLATEAU)
THOMSON LAKE END MORAINE
PHASE IV
N
OUTLET (III - IV)
OUTLET (III)
FRENCHMAN
CHANNEL (I)
STAGNANT ICE (I - III)
UNGLACIATED AREA
Meltwater Channel
Ice Front
Direction of Flow
1/2"=1 mi.

FIG 3. Park Area: Glacial History and Features

channels of the Denniel, Rock and Poplar Creek systems. This Frenchman channel cut at right angles across the preglacial Masefield Valley, causing a major revision in the old drainage system in this part of the area.

In the second phase, following a short readvance, the ice front again retreated north until it covered roughly the northeastern third of the park area. At this time the Lac Pelletier meltwater channel opened up in the northwest, filling a glacial lake in the area between the ice front and the plateau. This lake in turn cut an outlet (at 2900 ft ASL) through the plateau in order to drain to the south. The resulting channel (located in tp. 3-7 W3, south of Mankota) separated Pinto Butte from Wood Mountain proper. In the third phase of the glacial retreat, the ice front receded still further, until it occupied only the northeasternmost corner of the area. A new glacial lake was filled. Being lower than the earlier one (ca. 2700 ft), a new outlet was needed. This appeared along the northeastern flank of the plateau, south of the present location of Twelve Mile Lake. At the end of this phase, the ice front probably retreated from the area altogether, and the slow-melting stagnant ice on the plateau and southwest of the Frenchman also disappeared. A long ice-free hiatus, beginning about 28,000 B.P., ensued.

The fourth phase in the glacial sequence began about 20,000 B.P. It consisted of a readvance of the ice sheet into the northeastern corner of the area, during which the Thomson Lake end-moraine and a new glacial lake were formed. Due to the short duration of the new advance and the quick retreat following, the basin of this lake (at 2600 ft) was never completely filled, and no major new outlets were cut. Another hiatus followed. Then, about 13,000 B.P. the last readvance took place. This terminated at the Ettington end-moraine, just off the northeast corner of the map-area but it nonetheless had an effect. Two shallow (2400 ft) glacial lakes (Gravelbourg and Meyronne), separated by the Thomson Lake end-moraine, were created in the northeast. The outflow from these lakes cut a deep, narrow channel to the southeast, which is now partially filled by Twelve Mile Lake. The retreat of this last ice-front marked the end of the glacial period in the park area. After about 12,000 B.P. the area was entirely free of both ice and glacial meltwater.

Physiography

Glacial erosion and deposition on the bedrock surface of the park area created the three major physiographic zones which are found within its borders today. They are the uplands, the Frenchman River Plain and the Old Wives Lake Plain. Each of these possesses distinctive characteristics.[16]

The uplands, consisting of the Wood Mountain and Pinto Butte plateaux, occupy the south-central portion of the Park area.[17] They represent the flat-topped preglacial plateau, as modified along the edges by pro- and post-glacial water action: "dissected" being the apt technical term used to describe the complex of coulees and channels cut thereon. Aside from this the plateaux were changed very little. The mantle of glacial till is quite thin, ranging from 20 feet on top to a thin crust along the edges. None at all is found on the unglaciated

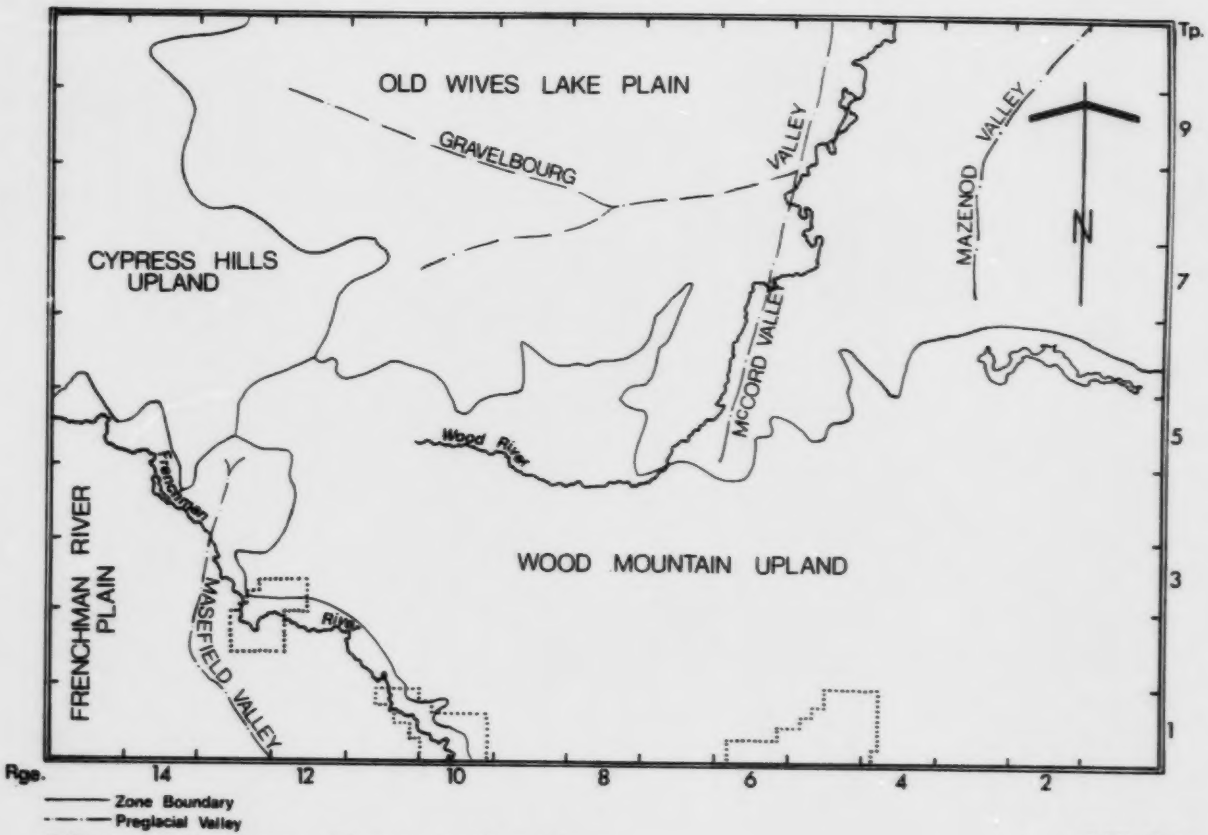

OLD WIVES LAKE PLAIN
GRAVELBOURG
VALLEY
MAZENOD VALLEY
N
CYPRESS HILLS UPLAND
McCORD VALLEY
Wood River
Frenchman
FRENCHMAN RIVER PLAIN
WOOD MOUNTAIN UPLAND
MASEFIELD VALLEY
River
Tp.
9
7
5
3
1
Rge.
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
Zone Boundary
Preglacial Valley
1/2"=6mi.

FIG. 4 Park Area: Physiographic Zones

area in the southeast (tps. 2-1 and 2-2 W3), on the slopes, and in the badlands along the border. The uplands, obviously, are the highest portion of the park area, ranging from 2700 feet above sea level to more than 3400 feet in spots. Generally speaking, the flanking slopes are gradual ones, although that to the south and west is more marked than that on the north. The terrain ranges from steep and broken on the edges of the plateau to moderately rolling on top. The Uplands mark the dividing line between the two major drainage basins to the north and south.

The Frenchman River Plain occupies the southwestern corner of the area. The deep, steep-walled meltwater channel valley of the Frenchman River marks its northeastern edge. This valley ranges in width from two to three miles in the northwest to a narrow quarter-mile gorge in the southeast. The Frenchman and the many smaller streams feeding it from the uplands - notably the Rock Creek system - are part of the Missouri drainage basin. Together with the separate Poplar Creek system in the southeast corner of the park area, they run into the Milk River in Montana. The district southwest of the Frenchman, however, is not connected with this system. Due to the broken and depressed topography created by the melting of a stagnant ice-sheet, drainage is internal. The plain ranges in elevation from 2500 feet to 2700 feet, although parts of the river bed drop below 2500 feet and several buttes in the zone rise over 3000 feet. Other than the valleys, it is largely covered with ground and hummocky moraine. This terrain is gently to moderately rolling, broken by the aforementioned buttes. Whitewater Butte (NW 1-14 W3) and Black Horse Butte (SE 3-15 W3) are local landmarks. One terrain feature of historical significance is the portion of the valley in and around NW 3-13 W3. At this point the alluvial river plain is quite wide and flat, and a combination of preglacial topography (the buried Masefield Valley) and intersecting tributary valleys (Denniel or Snake Creek) make it the easiest crossing point on the Frenchman within 20 miles in either direction. The crossing is fortuitously marked by the high Seventy Mile Butte (E1/2 3-13 W3).

The third major physiographic zone is the so-called Old Wives Plain, covering the northern half of the area. This is essentially the product of proglacial lacustrine material deposited over and retaining the basic contours of the preglacial drainage plain. Glacial drift (composed of lake and river deposits and ground moraine) ranges in thickness from 50 feet along the northern edge of the Uplands to 120 feet on the north-central portion of the plain around Gravelbourg - the latter section having been covered by a series of glacial lakes. Major topographical features associated with the plain are the deep, narrow meltwater feeder and outlet channels in the northwest (Lac Pelletier) and the southeast (Twelve Mile Lake) and the long, low ridge of the Thomson Lake end-moraine which divides the plain in two. The Ettington end-moraine, off the northeast corner of the map-area marks the beginning of the rough Coteau zone. The elevation of the plain drops gradually from about 2600 feet along the line of the uplands to below 2400 feet in the northeast. The terrain ranges from near-level in the broad valleys to gently rolling on the low ridges of higher ground reaching north from the uplands and on the scattered areas of ground moraine. The Old Wives Plain forms an integrated drainage basin, which in turn feeds into the South Saskatchewan system. The major components of this basin are the Wood River and Notukeu Creek networks, which drain

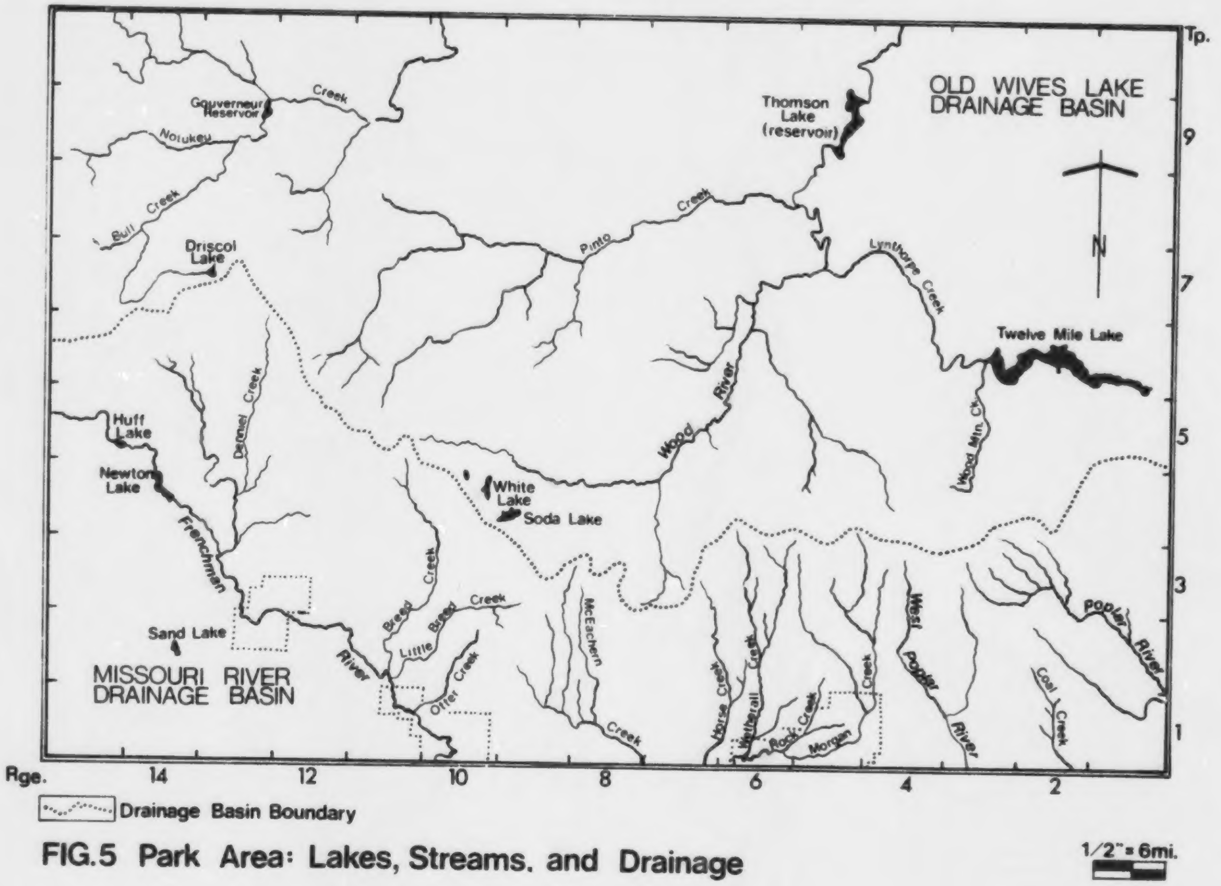

OLD WIVES LAKE DRAINAGE BASIN
MISSOURI RIVER DRAINAGE BASIN
N
Tp.
9
7
5
3
1
Rge.
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
Thomson Lake (reservoir)
Twelve Mile Lake
Lynthorpe Creek
Wood Mtn. Ck.
Pinto Creek
Wood River
White Lake
Soda Lake
Gouverneur Reservoir
Creek
Notukeu
Bull Creek
Driscol Lake
Huff Lake
Newton Lake
Frenchman River
Denniel Creek
Sand Lake
Breed Creek
Little Breed Creek
Otter Creek
McEachern Creek
Horse Creek
Wetherall Creek
Rock Creek
Morgan
Creek
West Poplar River
Poplar River
Coal Creek
Drainage Basin Boundary
1/2" = 6mi.

FIG.5 Park Area: Lakes, Streams, and Drainage

the uplands. These main streams, flowing northwards from the south and west, respectively, join to the north and empty into Old Wives Lake; however, the internal drainage becomes progressively poorer away from the Uplands, and shallow seasonal lakes are a common feature of the plain. The channels of the creeks on the plain are mere furrows. While they may be deep and fast in the spring, most of the year they strongly resemble half-empty ditches.

As can be seen, Wood Mountain is more a mountain by comparison than in fact. This was noted by Father Decorby, an early missionary. Decorby wrote to his superiors that, before arriving at Wood Mountain and the Cypress Hills:

> I imagined two gigantic masses covered with snow. But the names are misleading. These localities are but two ranges of forested hills, furrowed by little streams which have dug deep beds.[18]

Actually, Wood Mountain is even less 'mountainous' than its western counterpart. Being smaller in area, and about 1000 feet lower, it does not have the same pronounced effect on weather patterns which enable forests to grow on the Cypress Hills. Locally, however, it is the dominant feature. Its coulees have long provided water, wood and winter shelter and the uplands as a whole are a watershed - the source of numerous small streams which flow on the plains.

Water

Sources of water in the park area are limited. Surface waters mainly derive from runoff, and therefore tend to be seasonally variable. The many creeks may flow strongly in the spring and early summer, but by mid-summer their impressive valleys often contain "merely a series of alkaline ponds."[19] There are a number of small lakes in the park area but, aside from those now found on the main streams (Newton, Huff and Thomson, which are largely artificial), only Twelve Mile Lake is much more than a slough or salt pan. All shrink rapidly during hot summers due to the combination of long hours of sun and wind and a poor rate of outflow. Since much of the substrata in the area, through which the deep valleys cut, consists of marine shales or soft clays, high concentration of salts or mud in suspension can greatly limit the usefulness of surface water sources. The same is true for some of the groundwater, which also runs through such strata. Although good water is available from springs on the margins of the Tertiary gravels (as at Elm Springs in tp. 5-2 W3), these are limited in number and volume. In other vicinities, notably on the major creeks and the Frenchman River, water control projects have provided reservoirs (Ch. 6); in most of the area, however, relatively deep drilled wells are required to reach reliable sources of usable water.[20]

Climate

A discussion of the soils and vegetation of the park area must begin with a description of the climate. This is the determinant factor in both soil development and plant distribution. Overall, a lack of moisture is the dominant climatic feature of the area - the result of low precipitation rates and poor retention of that available. Further, wide climatic fluctuations are (and have been) the norm rather than the exception.

The park area has a semi-arid continental climate. This is a polite way of saying that it is a desert which cannot be relied upon to stay consistently dry. It is part of a climatic region classified as "Cold Steppe," one distinguished by a potential for evaporation which exceeds average precipitation. Precipitation levels in the area are normally among the lowest on the prairies, but are also the most variable. The annual average is in the neighbourhood of 12 to 13 inches, but frequent droughts (and less-frequent wet spells) are characteristic. About half of this total falls in the summer, during June, July and August, much during the frequent and erratic thunderstorms. About a third of the total falls as snow in the winter (40-50 inches).

The growing season in the park area is short, averaging 170 days between killing frosts, but lack of moisture often reduces its effective length still further and early frosts are common on the uplands and in river valleys. On the other hand, the area has more hours of sunshine in the average year than any other spot in Canada - more than 2200 hours - and, since half of this comes during the summer, growth rates can be high when sufficient moisture is at hand. Temperatures have ranged from minimums of 45° to 55°F below zero in winter to maximums of 105° to 110°F above zero in high summer. Prevailing winds are from the southwest, and include an occasional chinook in winter. However, they also reach their greatest velocity and frequency during the parts of summer when moisture loss can be critical. Overall, long, cold, dry winters and short, hot, windy summers are typical. The long, hot, sunny days and hot winds of summer can greatly reduce both ground moisture and surface water levels.[21]

Obviously, this climate is not the most inviting in the world. Over the millenia since the last glaciation, it has made an indelible mark on the park area. In particular, it has greatly reduced the types of vegetation which have been able to prosper and, as a result of this and related factors, has limited soil development. This in turn, has further limited vegetation and, by extension, agriculture.

Soils

Soils represent the cumulative product of several natural processes. The principal elements in their formation are the climate and natural vegetation of the region in which they develop, and the nature of the parent geological materials and the topography and drainage of the land surface on which they develop. In the park area the first factors are particularly important. All of the area is located in the Brown Chernozemic soil zone, which includes the grassland areas of most of southwestern Saskatchewan and closely corresponds with the "Cold Steppe" climatic region.[22] The soil types found in this zone demonstrate "the dominant influence of the factors of climate and vegetation upon soil development."[23] Basically, the aridity of the region has restricted natural vegetation to types (mainly grasses) with a limited capability for improving the organic content of the mineral soils found there.[24]

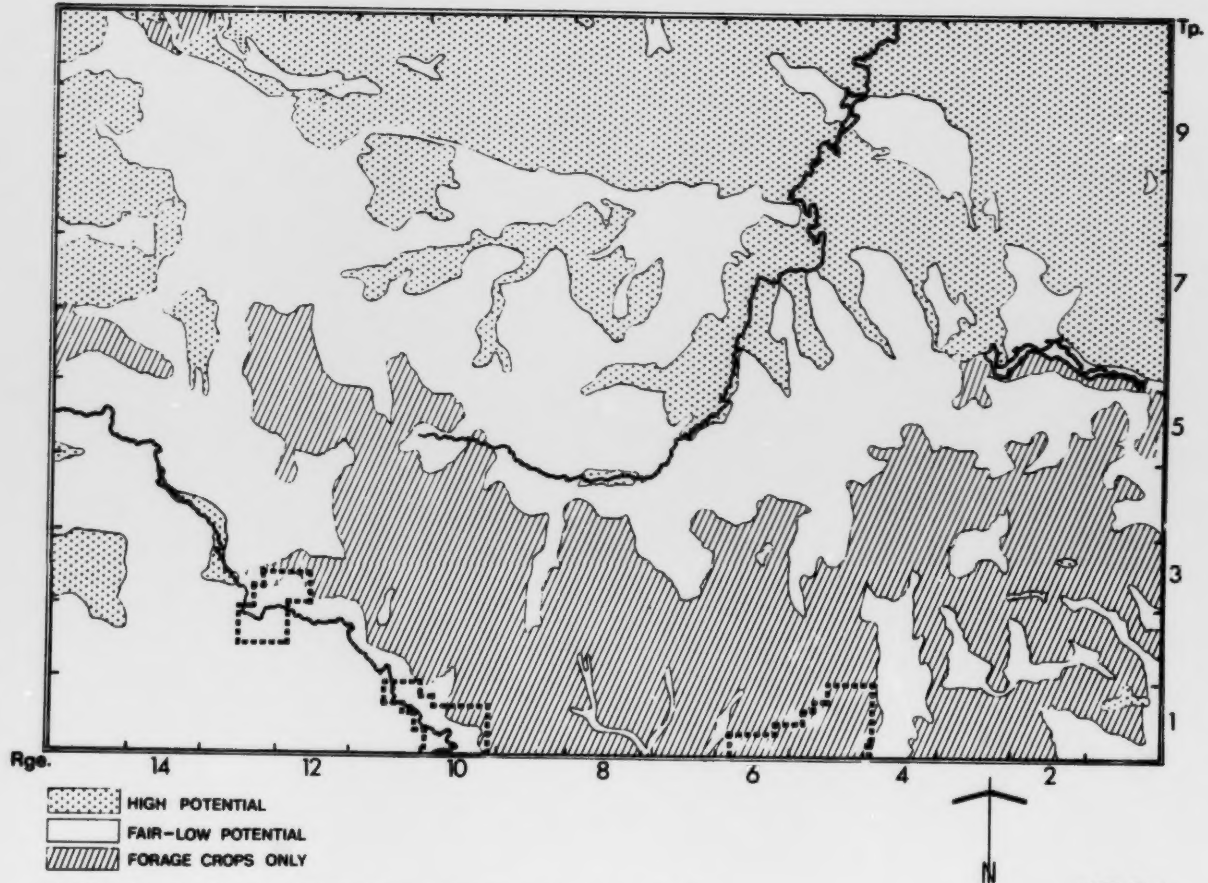

Tp.
9
7
5
3
1
Rge.
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
HIGH POTENTIAL
FAIR-LOW POTENTIAL
FORAGE CROPS ONLY
N
1/2"=6mi.

FIG.6 Park Area: Soil Capability for Agriculture

Within this general restriction, soil variations in the park area relate mainly to parent materials and topography. This means that a great deal of local variation is involved. At the risk of oversimplification it can be said that the deeper, the more even-textured and the flatter the deposits of glacial drift in a given location are, the better the soil development thereon has been capable of supporting vegetation. This applies to both natural and introduced (agricultural) species and communities for, for the most part, what was once the richest natural grassland is today the best farmland. The distribution of soils in the park area, as this observation suggests, is closely related to the configuration of the three major physiographic zones noted earlier.

The soils of the Old Wives Plain are the best in the park area. Two separate sub-areas, however, must be distinguished. The first comprises the lower plains to the north and northeast of the Canadian Pacific Railway line, around Gravelbourg and Assiniboia. The heavy clay loams found here are exceptionally fertile and resistant to soil drifting. As one observer has put it, "It would be difficult to overestimate the agricultural value of the soils that have developed on the lake sediments" in this area.[25] The second sub-area consists of the gently rolling ground and hummocky moraine country running south of this to the uplands. The major soils here are the medium-textured loams of the Haverhill Association. These are generally fertile, and provide good wheat land where flat but tend to be stoney and susceptible to leaching. Also, "soil drifting ... has been serious in certain localities during prolonged periods of drought,"[26] as was the case around McCord in the 1930s. On related areas covered by the light-textured fine sandy loam of the Hatton Association, found around Cadillac and Meyronne, soil drifting can be especially serious. During the 1930s these localities turned into the worst dustbowls in southern Saskatchewan,[27] as did the area south and east of Mankota. Here, farms on the poorly developed, variable-textured light loams of the Wood Mountain Association (derived from modified Tertiary deposits) also suffered severely. The plain, however, is now almost entirely under cultivation.

The soils of the Frenchman River Plain are somewhat less attractive for agriculture. Although they are similar to those found in the north, being Haverhill and Wood Mountain Association loams and clay loams developed on ground and hummocky moraine, the adverse undulating and strongly rolling terrain makes cultivation difficult in many parts of the area. Considering the water and shelter associated with these features, though, it is excellent stock-raising country; as witness, the fact that the last of the large ranches was located here until 1926, south of the river (Ch. 6). Efforts to farm have had mixed results outside of the valley, with outright failure dominating. Many pioneer farm communities north of the river, for example, have virtually disappeared, as in the case of Coriander and Gergovia. The arable portion of the Frenchman valley around Val Marie presents its own set of problems and possibilities. The river-deposited alluvium is generally good soil, but is light-textured (and therefore susceptible to drifting) and has a relatively high saline content requiring special handling. Today, irrigation makes this alluvial soil highly productive farmland (Ch. 6). Significantly, it is mainly employed to produce supplementary feed for stock run on the adjacent plain. Most of the southwest portion of the park area is now utilized for some aspect of stock-raising, a situation reflecting the lessons learned in the 1930s about the effects of abusing marginally productive soils.

These better portions of the park area soil cover make up about 70 to 75 per cent of the land surface (although this is not uniformly good). The remaining 25 to 30 per cent consists of the virtually uncultivable uplands. The Wood Mountain Uplands received only a thin mantle of drift during the glacial period. Much of this, particularly on slopes and in valleys, has since been carried away by wind and water. Where preglacial sediments have thus been exposed, soil development has been poor or nonexistent. Where development has taken place on level areas, however, potentially arable land is in many cases broken up or isolated by erosion and tends, in any case, to be stoney and with poor moisture retention. When the southern Saskatchewan soil survey was conducted in the early 1940s pedologists found it impossible to conduct a detailed survey. A "Dissected Plateau" classification was established "to cover the rougher, unsettled areas, which could not be traversed ... due to lack of roads."[28] Where mobile survey crews had such difficulty, the plight of would-be farmers can well be imagined. The area does offer certain advantages for ranching, for grass and shelter are plentiful and water supplies are usually adequate. Cultivation, however, is seldom possible except in a few spots which permit forage crops and in peripheral areas such as the Lonesome Butte district (tps. 1 and 2-4 W3). As in the Frenchman Plain area this lesson was learned by experience. Homesteaders south of Mankota, over the crest of the plateau, uniformly met with failure in the 1930s,[29] as did the Canadian Pacific Railway in its attempt to establish a colony at Coal Creek (tp. 1-2 W3) at this time (see Appendix A).

For the most part, the soils of the park area would be more productive if more moisture were available. Where irrigation has been possible this has proven to be the case, as it has, overall, in wetter spells. But soil capability must be evaluated in terms of the prevailing semi-arid conditions. Most of the time the moisture available is the bare minimum needed for cultivation, and careful conservation techniques are required to make maximum use of it and to prevent deterioration due to drifting. Such measures are essential for marginal lands brought under cultivation, and such lands make up a significant proportion of the area. Large quantities of these were brought into production in the early settlement period, without such protective steps being taken. The results were disastrous, and much of it was subsequently abandoned. Ironically, the method of restoration for deteriorated marginal lands has been reseeding, to make pasture. This in effect, meant recreating a version of the grassland which had originally been ploughed under.

Natural Vegetation

A discussion of the quality of soils in the park area is mainly of interest for the period after 1908. Before this time almost all of the land was devoted to the "production" of grass. Grassland constitutes the "natural state" of the area, which is to say that, in the absence of intensive agriculture, climatic conditions are such that tall herbaceous forms of vegetation such as trees and shrubs cannot (with minor local exceptions) establish themselves in the area. This is principally due to their inability to survive the periodic occurrence of drought. In the presettlement period, fires also contributed to this treeless state, but were a characteristic rather than a cause of natural grassland conditions.[30] It appears that the park area has been grassland since early postglacial times, following a short period when, due to increased moisture, forests may have dominated.[31] It has been estimated that as much as 90 to 100 million acres (about 150,000 square miles) of Western Canada was natural grassland before European settlement.[32]

Several different types of natural grassland can be distinguished on the plains of central North America. Their classification is a matter of great interest to ecologists. One recognized system separates grassland types "on the basis of the mature regional vegetation that exists under the influence of climate alone"; that is, on the basis of the natural species composition of the vegetation under average climatic conditions. By this yardstick the natural grassland of southwestern Saskatchewan mostly belongs to the "mixed prairie" association.[33] In the park area this is represented by a natural cover made up of two types of grasses. In terms of comparative height, these include various 'mid-grasses' (spear and wheat grass species) and one 'short-grass' variety (Blue Grama). The varying proportion of the two types in a given area is used to define the zonal type of the natural vegetation.

Due to fifty-odd years of wide-scale agricultural disruption, the original distribution of these zones in the park area is a matter of speculation. It is probable, however, that they closely coincided with the physiographic and soil zones discussed above. On the Old Wives Plain the mid-grasses would have dominated - these being characteristic of the lands which are now the best grain-growing areas, and for much the same reason - the fertility and drought resistance of the lacustrine soils.[34] On the southern parts of this plain and over most of the Frenchman River Plain, a mixture of mid- and short-grasses would have been found, this being typical on soils developed on glacial tills and moraine. The availability of moisture would have determined the relative importance of short- and mid-grasses in the mixture in any particular location. On most of the uplands the short-grasses would have been dominant, as they are now, since this type is best able to survive in poorer soil conditions.[35]

As in the case of soils and terrain, local variations on a common theme is the rule with the park area vegetation rather than the exception. To a certain extent this is the situation today, but it was especially true before agricultural disruption. Slopes, for example, would normally have exhibited a much different species composition from that on surrounding plains, due to a higher rate of runoff and poorer soil development - the effect being greater the steeper the slope. The same would have been true for valley floors, due to the greater moisture and, in some cases, higher saline content of the soils. Where protection from the prevailing winds was adequate shrubs and trees took hold, including aspens, green ash, wolf willow and buffalo berry. As the name "Wood Mountain" attests, this was the case in the coulees and valleys on the northern face of the uplands but deeper valleys throughout the area exhibited such vegetation.[36] Also, on the driest locations, and especially those with a southern exposure, pasture sage, mosses and cacti would have made up a significant part of the plant community.[37] While by far the most important type of vegetation, grasses were not the only element of the 'grassland'.

The boundaries of the principal vegetation zones, and of the latter "azonal" complexes, seem to have varied considerably in response to periodic climatic fluctuations and, to a lesser extent, as a result of such disturbances as fires and animal activities (e.g. over-grazing, trampling, burrowing). Modern cultivation, of course, has led to major disturbances, involving a disruption of normal plant succession, the introduction of non-native plant and animal species, and the protection of both cultivated and uncultivated land from the uncontrolled prairie fires which once were a common phenomenon. At the same time, however, it would be a mistake to picture the park area grasslands in the precultivation period as static or unchanging. Some would argue that the use of a "climax" definition to classify grasslands is misleading; that its implied picture of a relatively undisturbed, continuous pristine grassland in the presettlement period is idealized. Rather it appears that these grasslands "are more accurately viewed as a multivariate system whose state has long fluctuated in accordance with changes in climate, fire and animals, including man."[38] In other words, the grasslands of the park area, in the presettlement period, were part of a dynamic rather than a static ecosystem.

Wildlife

Just as the grasslands themselves have been significantly altered by man in the past half-century, so has the size and composition of their animal populations. Separating the two subjects, in fact, is almost impossible. The native animals of the grasslands are as distinctive a characteristic of the environment as its vegetation, climate and landscape.

In the park area today, and particularly in the less accessible district of the south, a fairly complete range of prairie fauna is still present. Mammals are represented by antelope and mule deer, prairie dogs (the only colonies in Canada) and the ubiquitous ground squirrel, rabbits, Missouri River beaver, coyotes, red fox, skunks, porcupines, bobcats and badgers. Birds found in the area include the rare burrowing owl and other varieties, various hawks and eagles, vultures, sage grouse and a large assortment of songbirds, ducks and geese. Reptiles present include rattlesnakes, four other varieties of snake and horned toads.[39] Many of these species are now barely maintaining themselves, or are already endangered or near to extinction in the area. This is particularly the case with those animals that compete with or are seen as a nuisance to ranching and farming, or those which have a cash value. Several species have already been eradicated, either purposefully or incidentally, among them the bison, plains grizzly bear and wolf, kit fox, wapiti and black-footed ferret.

All of the above-mentioned animals were present, if not always plentiful, in the area before 1880 on a permanent or seasonal basis. It is significant, however that four of the six eradicated species noted above are to be found on a list of pelts stored at the Hudson's Bay post at Wood Mountain in 1867-68. These included bison (485 hides), wolves (59), kit foxes (132) and grizzly (1).[40] By 1879 the bison had largely disappeared from the Wood Mountain country, with the last strays being reported in 1888.[41] By 1913 the antelope was close to extinction and the kit fox population had been destroyed.[42] The wolf lingered on in very small numbers, a few being reported as late as the 1960s.[43] The destruction of the wildlife in the park area was a sequential process. First, the Indian Métis and white commercial hunters killed off the bison, thus opening up the range for cattle. The stockmen then killed or drove off the major predators. The farmers, later, greatly thinned out the medium- and small-sized game remaining and, by altering the animals' habitats through cultivation, further reduced their numbers. As a local Métis Louison LaRocque, put it (about 1903)

> When I first saw dis contrie she was black wid buffalo from La Montagne de Bois to La Rivière du Lait. Den de buffalo go away but antelope still ron among de butte, and ducks and prairie chickens partout. Now de farmer is coming wid his plough and wire fence, and pretty soon de gopher all go too and we will have to buy our meat from de butcher.[44]

LaRocque was wrong only in underestimating the survivability of the gophers.

Conclusion

Having considered the factors entering into the definition of this specific study-area, and having described its physical characteristics, climate, natural vegetation and animal life, the task of setting these varied elements in a proper historical context remains. To do this, the importance of the location and natural resources of the park area in relation to the northwestern plains region as a whole must be considered. Its historical development cannot be dealt with in isolation.

Geographically, the park area occupies a central position in the northwestern Great Plains. In terms of "site," however, its importance in the history of the region has not corresponded with its advantageous location. "Site" has been defined by W.L. Morton as "a position of comparative advantage for production, exchange or transfer. It ... is not mere position, but a function, more or less complex, of position, environment and technology." He concludes that "the settlement of the West was in large measure a competition for site."[45] The key to this concept lies in the phrase "comparative advantage." The importance of a given area in the development of the West did not depend on the absolute value of its resources or location so much as on their value relative to those of other areas in the region. Nor was this value a fixed one. It varied in direct response to the changing needs and capabilities of the people using said resources. As a result, the "comparative advantage" offered by the park area changed several times in its history.

The park area is roughly equidistant from the four physical features - the South Saskatchewan and Missouri rivers, the Cypress Hills and the Missouri Coteau - which loosely mark the boundaries of the northwestern plains region. The first three features, however, have also been positions of comparative advantage in relation to the park area while the fourth (the Coteau) has comprised a barrier which reduced the advantages of the park area by making access from the east more difficult. In the pre-railway period, the two rivers offered permanent sources of water and wood and well-marked 'highways' into the plains, while the Cypress Hills offered reliable sources of wood, water and game. The park area, on the other hand had little to offer which might have given it an advantage relative to these sites.

The resources of the area in the presettlement period can only be described as marginal. Wood, grass, water and game were usually available, but not consistently so. The first two could disappear as a result of fire or drought; drought (or ordinary summer weather) could reduce the third; and the presence of the principal game animal - the bison - depended on too many uncertain factors. The chief characteristics of the area, at the time, were its harsh climate, barren landscape and isolation. Getting to it involved an arduous (and at times dangerous) journey, for uncertain returns. In short, the location did not offer many attractions. Its central position made it useful - or, at least, difficult to avoid - at times, but not indispensable. As a result, until the late 1870s most of the people using the park area were transients, rather than permanent settlers. They came, made use of the resources immediately available for as long as they were available, and passed on. As the bison were wiped out elsewhere, the plains around Wood Mountain became somewhat more attractive, but the basic situation remained the same.

The comparative advantages of the park area did not begin to improve until the 1880s. As settlement began to fill in the lands around its periphery, and after the bison were wiped out and the Indians brought "under control," the marginal resources of the area became more attractive. Or, rather, its isolation became a virtue overriding its other drawbacks, especially to ranchers requiring open range. These first permanent settlers were relatively successful, for their activities were well adapted to the environment. In effect, they made use of available resources, putting cattle into the ecological niche lately vacated by the bison, and otherwise caused only minor disruptions. It is significant, however, that large-scale ranching was not a success. Attempts at intensive exploitation of natural resources soon came up against the limits imposed by the physical environment.

By the turn of the century, the comparative advantages of the park area had again increased, along new lines. As the better arable lands around it were occupied, its vacant marginal ones became more desirable, and the pressure to open them up for agriculture soon overrode other considerations. In a very short time intensive settlement and cultivation got underway, on an indiscriminate basis.

This resulted in the rapid destruction of the natural vegetation and wildlife, thereby altering the character of the ranching industry. This intensive exploitation of natural resources, with little regard for the absolutes of the physical environment, was exceedingly dangerous. While the park area has some good farm land, it is not all good farm land, and in all cases special measures are needed to protect against the destructive effects of climatic extremes. These, to begin with, were not employed and the first waves of settlers were accordingly decimated - more than once - by drought and related deterioration.

It may be that a new balance has been reached in the park area since the 1930s. This remains to be seen. The history of the area is one of progressive encroachment on a marginal area to meet the gradually intensifying demands of an intruding economic system and culture. Since this larger system is not a static one, new pressures on and further changes in the area can be expected. The one certainty of this process is that if the basic characteristics of the physical environment are again ignored, a price will have to be paid; and it will probably be a high one.

CHAPTER II TIME OF THE BUFFALO: INDIANS, FUR TRADERS AND THE METIS

Introduction

The recorded history of the northern plains begins approximately two centuries ago, with the arrival of the first white fur traders and so-called "explorers." These men, however, did not represent the first contact of the native inhabitants of the area with European influences. In the interval between the first arrival of whites on the periphery of the continent, and their advent in the West, both the peoples and their lifestyles on the plains had undergone significant changes. These resulted, in part, from tribal migrations westwards under the influence of the fur trade (and in search of more congenial neighbours), the concomitant introduction of firearms, and the arrival of the horse from the south.[1] Moreover, these were only the first of many changes to come. The presence of an expansionistic European society had been felt even before its actual intrusion. In the two subsequent centuries of "recorded history" in the plains steadily increasing pressure was brought to bear on the native way of life, culminating in its virtual eradication in the late 19th century. This process of disruption and destruction does not make a very edifying story, especially from the point of view of the vanquished. It is, however, indispensable to an understanding of the early development and present state of the park area.

Native Peoples, Prehistory to 1870

It may be that the single most important date in the human history of the park area is 1879 A.D. The destruction of the buffalo herds at this time created a sharp division between the ten thousand or more years of bison-oriented life on the far side, and 99 years of 'bisonless' history on the near. It was once thought that the plains were uninhabited until Indians acquired the horse.[2] In the last 25 years or so this idea has been completely discredited. The accepted span of human occupation and use is now in the order of ten millenia, and is constantly being extended further back. While the archaeological investigation of southwestern Saskatchewan is still in its infancy, enough information has been accumulated to "demonstrate that the area is one that was occupied over the full range of man's known occupation of the plains and, at some time periods, was widely used."[3] During most of this time the southwest was grassland,[4] and the reason for its continual occupation by prehistoric Indians was the presence of the bison.

The prehistory of the northern plains is commonly divided into three periods. This includes (listed from earliest to latest) the "paleoindian" or 'Big Game hunter' period, the "mesoindian" or 'Archaic' period, and the "neoindian" or 'Late Prehistoric' period.[5] Since few connections between prehistoric and historic Indian groups have been definitively established, these prehistoric divisions have been based on changes in the types of tools in use (and their inferred relationship to cultural and subsistence patterns), rather than on known changes in the tribal identities of the occupiers.[6]

The southwestern corner of Saskatchewan was the first part of the province to be uncovered by the glaciers, and therefore was the first opened up to prehistoric hunters. The date at which this occupation began is still conjectural, in part because no stratified and datable paleoindian sites have yet been found here. In the park area itself, though, large numbers of paleoindian spearpoints have been found in surface sites in the McCord-Woodrow area.[7] The presence of these points, which include classic and reworked Clovis, Folsom and Plano varieties, suggests a starting date of about 11,500 B.P. or earlier if Carbon 14 dates for similar types in other parts of the plains are a reliable indicator.

An archaeologist studying the northwestern plains has described the paleoindians as "small groups of wandering hunters who relied principally on the large gregarious game animals for their sustenence," including bison and now-extinct varieties of big game, and notes that "None of the known sites gives evidence of long residence or of frequent returns to the same spot."[8] This completely nomadic lifestyle would largely explain the lack of detectable occupation sites. In any case, it is certain that the paleoindians were the first in a long line of nomadic hunters relying on the large grazing animals of the grasslands for their livelihood.

There is some evidence that the paleoindian period was followed by one of higher temperatures and increased aridity (the Altithermal), during which the northern plains were either lightly used or unoccupied.[9] When climatic conditions began to improve, however, hunters followed the bison back in - both, apparently, in large numbers. The middle prehistoric period has been dated at roughly 5000-2000 B.P., and the Archaic peoples seem to have moved into the Saskatchewan area from the southwest[10] - meaning that the park area may have been one of the first entered. On most of the plains this period is characterized by the use of a wide variety of food sources, but it has been noted that

> in contrast to portions of the northern Plains in the United States, in Canada there is nothing to suggest that the indigenous populations were at any time reduced to a foraging mode of existence.... animal bones from sites in southern Alberta and Saskatchewan are always predominantly of buffalo.[11]

The emphasis on buffalo (and their increased availability) is shown by the development of communal hunting techniques such as pounds (and possibly jumps) during this period.[12] It also seems probable that, while still nomadic, the population was larger and more regular in its movements than it had been before. Commenting on the results of a recent archaeological survey of southern Saskatchewan, one archaeologist has noted that the main period of early prehistoric utilization of the region "appears to be in the post-Oxbow period, or since 3,500 B.P., approximately, with an exceptionally heavy Oxbow occupation of the area immediately northwest of Swift Current" where a large burial ground (the Gray Site) was excavated.[13] Archaic occupation sites have also been reported in the vicinity of the park.[14] In all, it would seem that the ancestral Indians of this period found the park area a most congenial habitat, and therefore that they had developed effective methods of exploiting its resources.

This tradition of successful adaptation was carried on into the late prehistoric period (ca. 600-1600 A.D.), in which the bow and arrow and pottery both appeared on the plains. It appears that these were brought in from the eastern woodlands although it may have been more a case of indigenous peoples adapting new technologies than of migration.[15] Another feature of the period was the development or refinement of the 'buffalo jump' hunting technique to supplement the pound. Massive bison kills were certainly a distinctive characteristic of late prehistoric hunting, and archaeologists have found several such kill sites in southwestern Saskatchewan.[16] The buffalo jump was important in that it was more reliable than earlier methods. It has been observed that, "With this technique, the Indians were provided with a relatively certain method of producing supplies of meat and raw materials for clothing and shelter far in excess of what they could consume."[17] This surplus probably made larger populations possible, and may have led to some cultural elaboration. It is doubtful, however, if it had a great impact on the social organization or material life of the peoples involved. The communal hunting techniques required remained essentially the same as those used earlier, as did the nomadic type of life necessitated by the footloose habits of the buffalo.[18] While perhaps supplied with a better quality of material goods - quantity being limited by portability - it would appear that the late prehistoric Plains Indians led a life very similar to that of their forebearers, and to that of their immediate descendants.

The archaeological record strongly supports the conclusion of several eminent Plains scholars that, as one puts it

> In general ... the horse did not introduce new qualities into Plains culture. The true Plains Indians already possessed the traits that they continued to exhibit.... What the horse did was to intensify these traits.[19]

Long before this acquisition was made the Plains Indians were non-agricultural, nomadic buffalo hunters using the dog-drawn travois as a vehicle and the portable tipi for shelter. These distinguishing characteristics of Plains life were not engendered by the possession of the horse, but by the imperatives of existence in the semi-arid grasslands. With the horse, as Webb puts it, The Indians of the Plains became more nomadic (that is, they ranged further), less inclined to agriculture, more warlike, and far better buffalo hunters than they had been before.[20] The greater carrying powers of the horse, and the adoption of the 'surround' hunting technique (and later the individual kill) which it permitted, enhanced their ability to keep up with and exploit the bison herds; but their basic life-style was not substantially altered. The 'horse culture' which appeared on the plains in the 17th century was the ultimate refinement of age-old adaptive strategy of proven efficiency. It is somewhat ironic that this invaluable acquisition also marked the beginning of the end for the Plains Indian culture.

The most important tribes in the park area in the historic period were the Gros Ventre, Assiniboine, Plains Cree, Sioux and the Blackfoot. With the exception of the Cree, all are included on Webb's list of "typical Plains tribes, possessing in common, in the highest degree, the characteristic Plains culture."[21] These tribes seem to have acquired the horse between 1740 and 1770.[22] Each claimed the park area as part of their tribal hunting ground at some period in the ensuing century and upheld their claim for a greater or lesser time.

Having said this, a problem immediately arises as to the nature of such a claim. The Indian concept of a tribal area was highly flexible. Generally speaking, each tribe at a given moment had an area over which it claimed a proprietary interest, rather than absolute ownership (in the European sense). In 1915, for example, a Hudson's Bay Company officer noted that the Blackfoot and Gros Ventre did not insist upon an "absolute right to those parts of the Country which they generally inhabit; yet a slight claim of this Nature is admitted by them."[23] In other words, the tribal area consisted of a preferred hunting ground from which enemies would be excluded, if possible. These areas, however, were very large in relation to the size of the population occupying them. Since tribal movements in summer and fall were keyed to those of the buffalo - which were highly irregular[24] - large segments might be left unpatrolled at any given time as the incessant intertribal raiding for fun and profit demonstrates. It would seem that effective control was confined to wintering grounds and to summer hunting areas where sufficient numbers of warriors were concentrated to deter enemy intrusion. Around these cores would extend a larger belt in which the tribe could exercise control at need. But on the periphery, and especially where grounds claimed by hostile tribes abutted or overlapped, a no-man's-land would exist.[25] The Wood Mountain country may have been one of these "neutral zones" for a good part of the 19th century, if not before.

Due primarily to the lack of written accounts of early trade or travel in the park area, it is difficult to determine what tribe, if any, dominated in the area at any given time. While undoubtedly a desirable wintering site at times, as its selection by the Métis in the 1860s shows, other factors may have restricted use of the area to the summer - especially after the horse came into the picture. In the 17th and early 18th centuries the Gros Ventre were the most important tribe in southern Saskatchewan, and it is probably safe to assume that they made fairly extensive use of the Wood Mountain country.[26] In the latter half of the 1700s however, this tribe came under pressure from the north and east, as the better armed Cree and Assiniboine moved into the grasslands. A.J. Ray has argued that this intrusion was the result of the changing situation in the fur trade. Where, before about 1760, the latter tribes served as middlemen for the Hudson's Bay Company after this date they were outflanked by Canadian and Hudson's Bay Company traders dealing directly with the western tribes. To offset this loss of trade the Assiniboines and Cree took up the role of provisioners for the fur trade, and began moving onto the prairies in search of bison on a regular basis.[27] In doing so they pushed the Gros Ventre to the south and west. However, they did not move into the Wood Mountain area permanently at this time, but continued to winter in the parkland.[28] Ray notes that in the early 19th century "Along the southern frontier of the Assiniboine-Cree-Ojibwa territory, warfare with the Dakota Sioux continued unabated. Frequent hostilities were also reported ... with the Blackfoot groups to the southwest and west."[29] When Lewis and Clark travelled up the Missouri in 1804 they heard of Assiniboine south and west of the Cypress Hills, but found the stretch of the Missouri south of Wood Mountain to be uninhabited.[30] In other words, the Cree and Assiniboine pressure was heavy enough to remove the Gros Ventre from the scene by the early 1800s, but the new owners were not strong enough to occupy the southwestern periphery of their territory.[31]

One of the principal factors in making the park area part of a neutral zone at this time was the proximity of the Blackfoot Confederacy. This loose association of four tribes "had united in the 18th century to steal horses from enemies, and to enforce their claims to the buffalo in Saskatchewan."[32] When the Cree and Assiniboine moved against the Blackfoot's (then) allies the Gros Ventre, the Blackfoot reacted strongly to retain their use of the area along the South Saskatchewan River. Beginning about 1770, the Cree, Assiniboine and Blackfoot fought a continuous two-way guerrilla campaign. This conflict made the contested grounds a no-man's-land until the 1860s, when a Cree victory decided the matter.[33] This active front line also extended into the southwest.

In the 1850s the Blackfoot were apparently claiming an area (as described by an American visitor) from the Milk and Judith rivers north to the 50th Parallel, and from 106° W. longitude to the Rockies;[34] but it seems that there was actually some doubt as to the location of its eastern border. In 1871 Isaac Cowie was told that "As far back as the memories and traditions of the Crees then living extended" the Cypress Hills "had been neutral ground between many different warring tribes.... No Indian for hunting purposes ever set foot in the hills.... Only wary and watchful war parties."[35] If this statement was correct, then the Cypress Hills-Wood Mountain area may have continued as a buffer zone throughout the first half of the 19th century, with the Blackfoot dominant in the west and the Cree and Assiniboine in the east. It is apparent that by the 1860s the Assiniboine were more or less permanently established around Wood Mountain, since Cowie observed them wintering at Twelve Mile Lake in 1867, and made specific mention of the "Wood Mountain Assiniboine" on other occasions.[36] Ray has noted that after 1821 the Assiniboine, who had been centred in the Qu'Appelle and Assiniboine valleys, began moving south towards the Missouri, drawn by American trade. By the early 1860s most of the tribe was established south of the 49th Parallel, but both Moose and Wood Mountain remained in their and the Cree's hands.[37] These two tribes remained in the area until the 1880s (Ch. 3).

The relationship of the Sioux with the Wood Mountain country provides an excellent illustration of the dangers of ascribing inflexible tribal boundaries to the northern plains during the 19th century, and of the growing significance of the International Boundary during the latter part of the period. Two different Sioux groups were involved: the Santees, from the Wisconsin - Minnesota area, and the Tetons, from the western half of South Dakota.[38] The Sioux had been living south of the Great Lakes during the War of 1812. During this conflict they had sided with the British (except the Tetons who, ironically, remained neutral), but made peace with the Americans afterwards.[39] Earlier, in the late 17th century, the Assiniboines had split off from the Sioux and aligned themselves with the powerful Cree and Ojibwa, in order to reap the benefits of the latter's contacts with the Bay. Called the 'hohe' ('rebels') by the Sioux proper, the two groups maintained a constant hostility from the time of the split until the late 19th century.[40] This manifested itself in incessant border warfare, especially after the main body of the Sioux were pushed west to and beyond the Red River valley by the Ojibwa.[41] During the first half of the 19th century the powerful Sioux were frequently found in the north raiding the Assiniboine, Salteaux and, later, their Métis allies. A treaty between these two sides, arranged by Cuthbert Grant in 1844, lasted approximately as long as it took to trade presents, and the northeastern Plains continued in a state of sporadic warfare.[42]

While the Sioux were thus occupied in the north, greater problems were developing in the east, as American settlement moved into the Red River valley. By treaties in 1851 and 1858 the Santee had (unhappily) ceded their lands in return for assured reservations and treaty payments. Both terms were violated almost immediately. Settlers took Indian lands and the United States government failed to provide the promised money and supplies.[43] In 1862 the Santee Sioux rose in a bloody rebellion, and hundreds of white settlers and soldiers were killed, including an official who had suggested that "if they are hungry, let them eat grass."[44] The Santee, however, were soon overpowered by the U.S. Army.

As a result, Sioux began to flee into British territory late in 1862, and the exodus continued until 1864. Standing Buffalo, one of the leaders of the "Minnesota Massacre," arrived with 3,000 of his people after the defeat at Big Mound, and a nucleus of this band stayed on after the peace of 1864.[45] The Sioux were not welcome at Red River and, after being attacked by the Salteaux in 1866, moved west (staying north of the border). They were apparently quite familiar with the Wood Mountain country, since Standing Buffalo's band went there to hunt. These seasonal visits continued until about 1870.

At this time "A large camp, perhaps of two hundred lodges ... trekked to the Wood Mountain region. This camp, under the leadership of a Sisseton chieftain, White Eagle (Wambdiska), was still at Wood Mountain when the first Teton refugees arrived in the fall of 1876."[46] These were the Sioux encountered near Old Wives Lake by the North West Mounted Police in 1874. It appears - rather surprisingly - that the Sioux and the local Métis were on very good terms at the time. Commissioner French reported that "there has been a fight near the Cypress Hills.... [in which] the half-breeds and the Sioux appear to have killed all the Blackfeet." French was inclined to believe that the Sioux were responsible, but held a "formal pow-wow" with them to explain the police's arrival. The Commissioner told them "that the White Mother had heard that the American outlaws had killed some of her red children, and that she sent me ... to capture the men who did it," and "impressed upon them the fact that we did not want their land."[47] While French may have committed a diplomatic faux pas in implying that the Sioux owned Canadian land - a point never admitted by the government (Ch. 4) - he nonetheless seemed pleased with the meeting. At least, he did not seem worried about the Sioux' future behavior.

The Indian situation in the Wood Mountain country in the 1870s was somewhat confused. The Cree, Assiniboine and Sioux were all in the area on a more-or-less permanent basis: although, thanks to smallpox and the American Army, the Blackfoot were no longer in a position to either claim or use the area.[48] This compression (or rather disintegration) of tribal areas was indicative of the growing disruption of Plains Indian life induced by the pressures of American and Canadian expansion. The Cree and Assiniboine had moved into and through the park area in the first half of the century as direct white participation in the fur trade altered their economic position. The Sioux had moved north and west as American settlement and military pressure affected the Santee and Tetons. On a more general level, the extension of these tribes' zone of operations was necessitated by the progressive reduction of the numbers of buffalo available and the related shrinkage of their range.

In his monumental study of the buffalo, F.G. Roe noted that "up to about 1870, there never was any progressive 'extermination' for robes alone in Canada, as there was in the United States."[49] He ascribed this to the influence of the Hudson's Bay Company under which meat for provisioning remained the principal commodity in demand from commercial hunters, including both the Indians and Métis. At the same time, however, the number of buffalo in the northwest was definitely on the decline. While hide hunters may not have been a factor, the demand for meat was considerable, and steadily increased as time went on. By the end of the 1860s there were no bison left on the plains east of the Missouri Coteau.[50] This naturally drew the different Indian tribes already familiar with the area to the Wood Mountain country, the new focus of the northern buffalo range. The sanctuary offered, however, was only temporary. During the next decade the old status of the Wood Mountain country was completely reversed. Once a no-man's-land, it became one of the most popular pieces of real estate on the northern plains. The Cree, Assiniboine and Santee Sioux had to compete with Métis hunters, fur traders, explorers, surveyors, the North West Mounted Police and, finally, the refugee Teton Sioux for the remaining buffalo. This overcrowding was not to anyone's benefit, least of all the Indians'.

Early Traders

As the preceding discussion of the Plains Indians in the park area suggests, there was little direct operation by white fur traders in the Wood Mountain country before the 1860s. There were probably two main reasons for this. The first was the uncertain status of the area, in terms of Indian tribal territory. Few traders would relish the idea of finding themselves on their own in the middle of a battleground and, as long as other regions offered a better return in any case they seem to have avoided La Montagne de Bois. The second, and most important reason was its specific location. As has been noted (Ch. I) the park area was off the beaten path in the presettlement period. To the south, explorers and traders naturally followed the Missouri when moving westwards. Similarly, to the north the South Saskatchewan River offered the best line of access to the plains. Both of these routes bypassed the Wood Mountain country at a considerable distance and, when travellers and traders did take the risk of penetrating the new central zone, they tended to gravitate towards the Cypress Hills to the west which offered much greater attractions. Neither direct line of march from either of these rivers to the Cypress Hills goes through the Wood Mountain country. Taken together, these considerations explain why the park area was a backwater until the direct overland route from the Red River was opened up by the Métis. The following discussion largely centres on its shifting status as part of the zone of influence of one or other of these two indirect lines of approach.

While the story of the gradual Hudson's Bay Company extension from the bay to the plains is beyond the scope of this study, certain of its features are relevant. In the mid-18th century it became obvious to the company that independent Canadian traders were, through direct contact with the Plains tribes, siphoning off much of its trade, and also that its profits were reduced through the use of native middlemen. The company's first reaction was to send representatives to try and persuade the Plains tribes to come directly to the bay. Such was the task of Henday in 1754 and Cocking in 1772-73.[51] They were not overly successful, and the company had to resort to direct trade.

The period 1780-1821 was notable for the fierce competition between the Canadians and the company, in the course of which large numbers of posts were built further and further up the South Saskatchewan. But, while Indians from the Wood Mountain country must have traded at these posts, and at least two trips to the Cypress Hills were made, no direct contact with the park area was recorded. It appears that, after 1805, large-scale efforts to exploit the central zone were abandoned.[52] After the amalgamation and reorganization of 1821, the Hudson's Bay Company tried again, but the costly Bow River Expedition of 1821-22 and the "Piegan Post" established near the present site of Calgary in 1832-34 did not produce adequate returns. This, plus unruly Indians and growing American competition, led to the abandonment of both Chesterfield House (on the Saskatchewan) and Piegan Post. At this stage of development the Plains tribes had no great inducement to trap the furs so desired by the company, while it could not economically transport buffalo meat and hides out. As a result, as J.G. Nelson notes, "the Hudson's Bay Company made no further attempt to establish a fur trade post in the Cypress Hills area until 1871."[53]

The Missouri River, the second avenue of approach to the northwestern plains, was opened up later than the South Saskatchewan, but with considerably more success. Although there were a number of early travellers on the river, including La Verendrye's sons and various traders, the process of development actually began with the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 and the subsequent Lewis and Clark expedition of 1804-6. Aside from providing a classic description of the northern plains in their "pristine" state, the expedition showed the potential of the region for the fur trade. Large-scale operations, involving hundreds of men annually, began in 1808, Jacob Astor's American Fur Company being prominent.[54] By the 1830s permanent posts had been established on the Upper Missouri.[55] Due to their close proximity to the northern plains market, the Americans' advantage over the Hudson's Bay Company was considerable to begin with but, beginning in 1831, the use of steamboats on the river turned it into a virtual monopoly.[56]

In the first period of American operations on the Missouri, up until the American Civil War, the emphasis was on furs. Where the method of trade in British territory was usually to collect furs trapped by the Indians, in the United States the usual practice was to trap directly; hence the famous "Mountain Men." During this period, however, there seem to have been few expeditions into the Wood Mountain-Cypress Hills area, probably because of the danger posed by the Blackfoot. J.G. Nelson notes only two possible American incursions at this time - one a post at "Stick Hill" in 1831, and another a post "on the frontiers of Canada" wiped out by the Gros Ventre in the same year.[57] The true "boom" on the Missouri came in the 1860s, when the emphasis shifted from peltry to buffalo robes and hides.[58]

It is unlikely that a better example of free enterprise run rampant can be found than the situation which existed along the 49th Parallel in the late 1860s and early 1870s. With the termination of the American Fur Company's operations in 1864,[59] the way was cleared for an invasion of free traders. The result was disastrous for both the Indians and the buffalo. Unlike the larger corporations, the hundreds of small entrepreneurs involved had no economic motive to plan for the future. As one historian notes, the free traders' "brief period of power in the Whoop-Up country was based on the time-honored policy of grabbing up the robes while they lasted, meanwhile debauching the Indians with whiskey to secure their properties quickly and cheaply."[60] Rotgut 'whiskey' and repeating firearms were staple trade items, and the two together wrought almost unbelievable havoc:

> The new weapons revolutionized buffalo hunting. This gun that could easily be reloaded on a running horse rendered the bow and arrow obsolete for both hunting and warfare. With these improved arms Indians could kill more buffalo and have more robes to trade with Americans for more whiskey and ammunition. It was about as vicious as any circle could be.[61]

Even seemingly harmless items such as tobacco, tea, sugar, flour and metal implements had a harmful effect, in making the Indians dependent on trade for everyday goods.[62] Alcohol, however, was at the root of the problem.

The traffic in whiskey made the then-unmarked International Boundary a useful screen for the traders, since its sale to Indians was illegal in the United States. By moving near or, usually, just over the line they could serve both American and Canadian Indians with impunity. American officials protested to Ottawa against this use of Canadian territory,[63] but the latter was unable to enforce existing Canadian regulations until 1874. In the meantime, the trade boomed. The heart of it was Ft. Benton and, in particular, two large mercantile firms based there.

I.G. Baker and T.C. Power started business in 1865 and 1867, respectively,[64] and by 1870 were the most powerful businessmen in the territory. They traded directly with the Blackfoot and held permits to trade with the Assiniboine (among others); they also furnished credit and goods for some independent traders.[65] Since these companies were deeply involved in the trade in the Cypress Hills from 1872 on,[66] and since there was an active whiskey trade going on in the park area by 1874,[67] it is probably fair to assume that they were involved in the latter. At least one American post, Ft. N.J. Turnay on the Frenchman just south of the line, was operating in the area in the mid-1870s. This was described by an American Boundary Commission officer in 1874 as:

> a log structure, comprising store house and dwelling, occupied by two independent traders. They informed me that they were so much annoyed, and subjected to so much loss of property, by raids upon them by Indians ... that they proposed burning the buildings and leaving the country, which purpose was ... carried into effect later in the season.[68]

Dawson reported in the same year that most of the Métis hunters in the neighbourhood traded their robes at Turnay in the fall, and many also wintered there.[69] Before 1874 most of the trade in the park area was handled by the Métis who, being well organized, probably had less to fear from the Indians. Isaac Cowie noted that in the fall of 1871:

> There were métis traders at Wood Mountain, Pinto Horse Butte, and Eagle Quills; but the only one who annoyed us was Antoine Oulette, generally called Irretty, who made several excursions with liquor and delighted in trying to make everyone drunk, and in proclaiming sedition against the Canadian Government.[70]

Oulette had connections through the overland route from the east (see below) but, if he was trading whiskey, may also have been dealing through the United States at this time.

The arrival of the North West Mounted Police in 1874 put a sudden end to the whiskey trade at Wood Mountain and (after 1876) moderated the impact of the sale of repeating firearms somewhat by restricting the sale of ammunition to United States Indians (Ch. 3). It did not, however, end the presence of United States traders. On the contrary, the presence of the police meant a greater volume of trade for, until the 1880s, it was cheaper to supply western police posts from the south. The lion's share of this trade went to the large commercial firms, who quickly adapted themselves to the new situation. In fact, the change was a highly beneficial one from their point of view. Effective law enforcement put an end to the high profit margins necessary to keep independent traders in business, whereas the large firms throve in the new atmosphere of stability.[71] As police activity at Wood Mountain increased after 1876, several American firms started operations near the post (Ch. 3). They remained there until the departure of the Sioux and Métis and the consequent reduction in police strength substantially reduced the market possibilities. It is significant that one of the oldest of these firms, Leighton and Jordon, sold out to J.L. Legare (see below) in 1880 or 1881.[72] Legare represented the overland route from the east, both in its old manifestation as cart transportation and in its coming one as a rail connection. The construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway on the prairies in 1881-83 marked the final transfer of the Wood Mountain country into the Canadian sphere of economic influence.[73]

It appears that, on the whole, the Wood Mountain country was a marginal trade area until late in the 19th century. Neither the Hudson's Bay Company, before the 1830s, nor the United States fur traders after had much interest in it, and neither established firm control over it. Their activities to the north and south of course had a major impact, especially on the movements and way of life of the

Indians. This, however, was exercised at a distance. The effects of the American whiskey trade, from 1865 to 1874, were more immediate and more serious, but nonetheless the Wood Mountain country remained on the periphery of the British and United States traders' major area of operations, which was focused further to the west. It is probable that this was due to the growing numbers of Métis in the park area.[74] Unlike the Indians, the Métis were not content to simply be customers of American merchants. They took an active part in trade as freighters and middlemen and, while most of their activity was oriented towards the Missouri, they kept open an alternate line of communications and supply to the east. In one sense, the Métis were the vanguard of Canadian interests in the Wood Mountain country.

The Métis

The most important overall theme in the human history of the park area is the transformation from the traditional way of life based on the buffalo to that dictated by the requirements of a commercial agricultural system. The Métis served as the catalyst in this transformation. A catalyst, according to Webster, is a substance acting as an agent in a chemical process which speeds up the process without itself being altered therein. If the term "human" is substituted for "chemical," the Métis role in the development of the park area is described with admirable clarity. The Métis were, at one and the same time, refugees from and agents of the advancing white civilization. They served its needs without necessarily subscribing to its goals or its way of life. In the long run this essential ambiguity caught up with the Métis, but not before they had rendered invaluable assistance in the establishment of the new order.

The exact date at which the Métis first ventured into the park area is uncertain. Although individual traders may have arrived earlier, it is probable that they first did so in an organized fashion on one of the annual Red River hunts. The communal hunt, which started in 1820, was divided into two parts in the mid-1840s; one of which covered the country to the west of Red River.[75] These expeditions had reached out to the Missouri Coteau by the early 1850s and had gone as far west as the Cypress Hills by 1859.[76] H.Y. Hind, writing of 1858, suggests that the Métis had not crossed the Coteau at this time, but contradicts himself elsewhere in the same account in stating that, at Qu'Appelle, a Métis showed him a piece of coal from Wood Mountain.[77] It would, therefore, seem that the Métis were familiar with the area in the mid-1850s.

The Red River hunt was seasonal, in that the expeditions returned to their home base each fall. This modus operandi was viable as long as sufficient numbers of bison were available near enough to Red River, and necessary, as long as hostile Indians (especially the Blackfoot and the Sioux) had the power to keep smaller hunting and wintering parties out. Both factors changed in the early 1860s. As the main concentration of bison were found further and further westwards, travelling time became prohibitive. The answer was to establish advanced bases on the plains, and this was made possible by the growing power of the Métis themselves and by the territorial advances of the relatively friendly Cree and Assiniboine (see above). Accordingly, the first Métis began to winter in the park area in the 1860s.

The evidence for occupation in this early period is somewhat slim. A rock found by later settlers northeast of Hillandale (tp. 5-13 W3), inscribed "G. Lavalle, January 15, 1861,"[78] suggests that *hiverants* were around in the winter of 1860-61. The first specific reference, however, concerns 1868, when "Some fifteen families went to the White Mud River Valley (Rivière Blanche) where they built lodgings and took up residence."[79] It is almost certain that this settlement was at or near Seventy Mile Crossing, especially since the Boundary Commission established a depot on the spot four years later. There also seem to have been a number of other families in the vicinity of Wood Mountain in the winter of 1868-69.[80] It is worth noting that the establishment of these small (and transitory) communities coincided with the development of the hide and robe market through the American traders on the Missouri. As Giraud notes:

> The Prairie attracted more and more métis from the Red River, not only because it could still offer them the possibility of indulging in their favoured customs far from a country which was overthrowing their concepts, but because it ensured them an important source of profit because of the increasing demand for buffalo hides.[81]

Splitting up into small wintering groups in fall, they came together in the spring for hunts to the west and south, then late in the year returned to the same or similar localities to winter - the specific site depending on the resources available at the time.[82]

The profits to be made in buffalo robes also attracted traders. Isaac Cowie has left a detailed account of his journey to a wintering post of Ft. Qu'Appelle at Wood Mountain in the winter of 1867-68. While this was a Hudson's Bay Company operation, it was staffed by Métis. The purpose of Cowie's trip, made by dogsled with a Métis guide, was to take an inventory of the goods at the post and to bring in new supplies. The establishment was a "big log hut" and seems to have been located in the same general area as the later boundary commission and police posts. Cowie came in from the northeast "over the foothills and a lake at the base of Wood Mountain [Twelve Mile]."[83] He found the post in good order, with a collection of goods comprised of "485 prime buffalo robes, 22 buffalo bosses, 79 buffalo tongues, 21 prime badgers, 1 grizzly bear, 21 red foxes, 132 kitt foxes, 16 hares ... 3 skunks, 1 wolverine, [and] 59 wolves."[84] The last item may indicate that wolfers were operating in the area.[85] The stock of trading articles included large quantities of cloth, sundry metal implements, gunflints, ball and powder, and "110 pounds of plug tobacco." To this Cowie added more tobacco, tea, guns (flintlocks) and gunpowder, an assortment of blankets and hardware, and sugar.[86] It would seem that this outpost had a fairly successful winter, and that Hudson's Bay Company winter outposts were maintained in the area at least until 1870-71.[87]

Since Isaac Cowie was one of the few early visitors to the park area to eventually put pen to paper, his description of the Hudson's Bay Company trading post at Wood Mountain has received a disproportionate share of attention. There were many Métis traders in the area at the time whose activities were not recorded in any detail. These included

J.P. Dauphinais, George Fisher and Antoine Oulette. The latter two were particularly important in the next step in the opening up of the Wood Mountain country, which came about as a result of the Insurrection at Red River in 1869-70.

In the summer of the latter year, a number of Métis in the parishes of St. Joseph de Pembina and St. Francois-Xavier began to consider a move west. Rondeau records that several traders were then at La Montagne de Bois "in order to maintain contact with the Indian hunters. One of these, a Métis by the name of George Fisher, was asked to survey the area and report if it was suitable for settlement."[88] His recommendations were evidently favourable for, in the fall of 1870, 40 families of English and Canadian half-breeds from Pembina and 35 from St. Francois-Xavier set out for the west, each with four or five carts and a dozen horses. On their arrival they established themselves for the winter near Montague Lake, at St. Victor.[89] They were accompanied west by the Rev. Father Jean-Marie Lestanc, an Oblate missionary. Lestanc had advised Riel during the insurrection, and thereby "incited reprimands from the Orangemen ... in Manitoba" making a trip to the plains advisable, for reasons of health. A chapel was immediately built and, with 40 baptisms and seven marriages to attend to, Lestanc undoubtedly had a busy winter.[90] The new arrivals, plus the Métis already in the area, gave him approximately 100 families to care for in 1870-71.[91]

Another important arrival in the fall of 1870 was Jean-Louis Legare. Legare was one of the most interesting individuals in the early history of the Wood Mountain country. From his arrival in 1870 until his death in 1918, he was involved in virtually every important event and development in the area, from fur trading and dealing with the Indians to ranching and farming. Indeed, he was usually one step ahead of everyone else. Legare was born in Quebec in 1841. In his twenties (about 1864), like many French-Canadians of his generation, he was drawn to the United States in search of work. For the next three years he wandered through Rhode Island, New York, Pennsylvania and Minnesota without finding permanent or remunerative employment. In 1867 he went west, and was hired as a trading post clerk at Devil's Lake, N.D. (Ft. Totten). After he worked for two years in various establishments, including Antoine Oulette's, the latter hired Legare to run his winter outpost at La Montagne de Bois for $25 per month.[92]

Legare spent the winter of 1870-71 running Oulette's post at Little Woody (Fife Lake), the location of which probably signifies a Métis wintering community nearby. His time appears to have been well spent. In the spring he and his assistant made the 50-day trip to Pembina with 15 fully loaded carts. It appears that he made a good impression for, while he was at Red River, George Fisher offered him a partnership. Fisher provided $2000 worth of trade goods, plus assistants and equipment, while Legare was to run the business and receive one-third of the profits.[93] On his return to Wood Mountain in the fall of 1871 with 15 carts of trade goods he found that the Métis, after returning from the summer hunt, had selected a new village site. This was in a coulee four miles east of the later location of the police post. A chapel had been built, Father Lestanc was already in residence, and it seems that there were about 100 families of Métis in the area.[94] Legare also had some competition, since Antoine Oulette was very active at Wood Mountain in the winter of 1871-72.[95]

The Métis community in La Montagne de Bois got off to a very good start in 1870-72. In the latter years a large number of new families arrived from Pembina to share the good hunting.[96] Game remained plentiful for two years, partially due to a series of mild winters, and 175 families regularly wintered at Wood Mountain and the Whitemud. Giraud notes that, at this time, "the banks of the White Mud River were especially attractive to a large number of hunters, and the villages which were built there could well rival those of Wood Mountain."[97] This relative continuity of settlement led Legare to establish a permanent post at Wood Mountain, and kept Father Lestanc extremely busy, performing 19 marriages, 116 baptisms and 197 confirmations between the fall of 1871 and the spring of 1874 at both locations.[98] In all, it was a prosperous and active period.

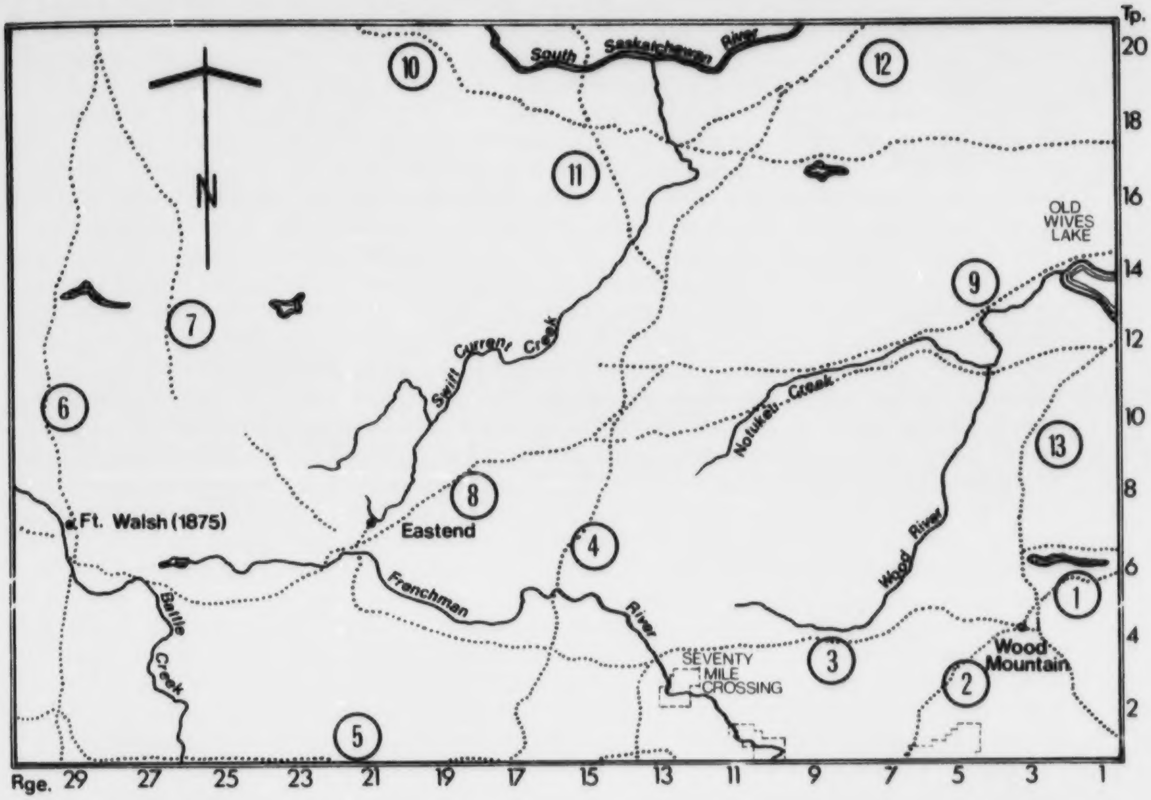
The fall of 1873 marked the beginning of a new phase in the history of the Métis community. The summer hunt went out very early in 1873, but had to go further afield to find buffalo than had been usual in the previous years. When it came time to select new quarters in the fall, more than half of the Métis families decided to winter on the Milk River "to follow the buffalo," with the remainder returning to Wood Mountain and the Whitemud. Father Lestanc went with those going to the United States.[99] When Capt. Anderson of the Boundary Commission visited Wood Mountain in October of 1873 he found it all but deserted, even though the first snow was already on the ground.[100]

The purpose of Anderson's trip was to find a suitable spot for a summer depot for the Boundary Commission surveyors in 1874 (Ch. 5). He was apparently impressed with the site of Legare's store at Wood Mountain for, the following May, a commission work crew arrived and began construction of a log depot nearby on Wood Mountain Creek. For the next six months the depot was a hive of activity, and a number of local Métis found employment as labourers, scouts, and teamsters.[101] At the same time, however, an incident occurred which served to emphasize the significance of the commission's work. In the spring of 1874 Legare went to the Milk River to trade with his errant customers, and quickly collected 540 buffalo hides and other pelts. But then, on the way back to Wood Mountain, his train was stopped by a United States Department of Revenue officer who (for reasons unknown) confiscated the entire cargo. This action cost Legare about $9000 and undoubtedly convinced him that times were changing.[102]

In the summer of 1874 the park area was visited by G.M. Dawson, a Canadian naturalist conducting a survey of the geology and resources of the border country for the Boundary Commission. Since they were made at a crucial time in its development, his comments on the Métis community are of great interest. Dawson was not overly impressed with the settlement at Wood Mountain, as this description shows:

> No cultivation of the ground has been attempted by the few families frequenting the place, and its prosperous days are over, as the buffalo, on which its existence depends, now rarely come so far east. It is, in fact, merely a base for a certain number of hunters and traders, who have found it convenient to erect wintering shanties there.[103]

He believed the Frenchman River could "at present be considered the eastern limit of the buffalo ... in this latitude," and noted that "During the last sixteen years, their front has been driven back, in the


Tp.
20
18
16
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
South Saskatchewan River
OLD WIVES LAKE
N
Swift Current Creek
Notukeu Creek
Wood River
Frenchman River
Battle Creek
Ft. Walsh (1875)
Eastend
SEVENTY MILE CROSSING
Wood Mountain
①
②
③
④
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⑥
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FIG.7 Southwestern Saskatchewan: Trails in 1874

1. Wood Mountain to Ft. Ellice; "Traders Road" and Boundary Commission Trail
2. Wood Mountain to Ft. N.J. Turnay; Boundary Commission Trail
3. Wood Mountain to the Cypress Hills
4. South Saskatchewan River to Missouri River
5. Boundary Commission Trail
6. Red Deer Forks to the Cypress Hills and Missouri River
7. Red Deer Forks to Eastend
8. Cypress Hills to Ft. Qu'Appelle; "Plain Hunters Trail"
9. Cypress Hills to Ft. Qu'Appelle; north branch
10. Battleford to Ft. Qu'Appelle
11. To Battleford (see 4)
12. To Batoche (see 4)
13. Wood Mountain to Ft. Qu'Appelle; old trail.

vicinity of the line, over two hundred miles, and it is probable that their northern limit has been contracted to at least a like amount."[104]

Actually, Dawson's gloomy comments were a trifle premature. Wood Mountain's days as a buffalo range were not entirely over; the absence of the herds in 1874 being due to the prevailing drought in the area.[105] His observations, however, underlined the basic problem facing the Wood Mountain Métis in the near future. Since they were quite numerous, and depended entirely on the buffalo for a livelihood, they had to spend the summer "at large, in the neighbourhood of any district which happens to be well stocked." When buffalo were scarce, as in 1874, this often meant the Milk River, where Dawson encountered a "Big Camp" made up of hundreds of carts, 200 tents and 2000 horses.[106] The hunters, as usual, planned to move east for the winter, "a few of them going to Wood Mountain, but most to the White Mud River, south of the line."[107] This necessary pattern of movement had served well in the past, when only natural conditions had to be considered. The demarcation of the boundary, however, placed an artificial (but nonetheless effective) barrier down the middle of their traditional range. As Legare's experience showed, the Métis had now to consider the attitude of the American authorities when journeying to the south.

On the Canadian side of the line, the most important event of the year was the arrival of the North West Mounted Police. When passing north of the park area in August, the police made use of supplies from Wood Mountain, and in October a small detachment was established for the winter in the former Boundary Commission depot (Ch. 3). The police considered Wood Mountain an important location, and in commercial terms alone they were certainly justified in doing so. When passing by in the late summer they were able to acquire 4700 lbs of dried meat from the Métis without advance notice and, on the trail, encountered a number of caravans moving supplies to and from the settlement. One of these, belonging to Antoine Oulette, consisted of "a waggon and 11 carts [filled] with dried meat and pemmican," a sizeable shipment.[108] An even greater one was made in the summer of 1875, when Legare was awarded a contract to supply 25,000 lbs of buffalo meat, at fifteen cents per pound, for Indian reservations in the east.[109] Despite the shift in the bison range towards the southwest, and the migration of the Métis to conform with it, the traders at Wood Mountain remained the chief market for the proceeds of the Métis hunt. J.P. Turner has suggested that "With the decrease of danger from marauding Indians as a result of Mounted Police protection, the Metis ... boldly extended their trading and hunting operations."[110] While there is some truth in this assertion, it is apparent that the 'extension' was well under way before the police arrived.

In the mild winter of 1874-75 the better part of the Métis camp remained on the Milk River, being joined there in December by Lestanc's replacement, Father Jules Decorby.[111] For the next two years they continued to hunt and winter west of Wood Mountain, wherever the buffalo could be found. In the winter of 1875-76 only ten families stayed at Wood Mountain, all the rest being in the Cypress Hills area.[112] During these years their numbers grew considerably, as families from Qu'Appelle and from the Batoche district moved south to hunt the last of the buffalo.[113] When, in the fall of 1876, the main encampment moved back to the Wood Mountain country, fully 500 families were involved.[114] This population, larger than any seen before, spread itself out in "camps of fifty to eighty familes each; which gives rise to a certain number of villages composed of temporary huts"[115] but Wood Mountain remained the principal settlement.

The Métis returned to Wood Mountain at this time to take advantage of the greater numbers of buffalo now concentrated in the district.[116] They were not, however, the only ones interested in the herds. The Sioux fleeing from the United States Army made directly for the same area - the Wood Mountain country being the only place offering them both provender and political sanctuary at this time. Indeed, in 1876 there were rumours "that the Sioux ... have sent word to the Half-breeds not to winter at Wood Mountain or Milk River, as they intend coming over to steal horses, and kill any person about those places."[117] But Insp. Crozier believed the rumours to be false and, even if they were true, the Métis moved to Wood Mountain regardless. When the Sioux did come, in November, there was no immediate friction. At Wood Mountain Legare made a gift of thirty dollars worth of goods to the first chief to arrive,[118] and the North West Mounted Police immediately came in to take control of the situation (Chs. 3 and 4).

The presence of the North West Mounted Police kept actual conflict between the Métis and the American Sioux to a minimum over the next five years, particularly by deterring minor crimes which might have incited a major confrontation, and by keeping communications between the two groups open. During the entire period of the Sioux occupation the worst incidents reported were a few cases of horse theft and harassment.[119] The police, however, could do little to prevent a more fundamental conflict of interests. Both Indians and Métis needed food, and had to hunt the same limited supply of game to get it. In 1877 it was reported that:

> Sitting Bull warned some half-breeds who were encamped near Wood Mountain to move away or they would force them. The Half-breeds declined to go as they wanted some buffalo themselves, whereupon the Sioux rode through the camp shouting and firing their guns.[120]

This attempt to intimidate the Métis did not succeed, but neither did the touchy situation result in bloodshed, then or later. Both parties continued to take as much buffalo and other game as they could get, with inevitable results.

In his Annual Report for 1878 Commissioner James Macleod of the North West Mounted Police described the effect which the Sioux were having on the supply of buffalo. "Not only have the Sioux killed off an immense number of animals," he reported, "but by the continued presence of such increased numbers, they have prevented the northern Indians from securing their usual supplies, and have driven the large herd south [into the U.S.].... It is a matter of reasonable doubt whether the herd will ever return to anything like the same number as heretofore."[121] Although the Métis stayed in the Wood Mountain area in the winter of 1877-78, their future there was none too bright. In his report for 1879 Macleod noted that his earlier prediction had, unfortunately, come true; although he "little thought the prophecy was to be so literally fulfilled." The commissioner reported that, during the year, "The main herd, hemmmed in by nearly all the Indians of the North-West and Montana, remained south of the Milk River."[122]

When the buffalo could not come to Wood Mountain, the residents had either to starve, or to go to the buffalo. In the early summer of 1879 both the Métis and the Sioux naturally chose the second course of action. The Sioux were emboldened to enter United States territory by the fact that the Army, on Washington's orders, had remained on the Missouri but the local American commander (Gen. Nelson Miles) swiftly reacted to their incursion. With a force of 800 soldiers and Indian scouts and with two rapid-fire cannon, he attacked the Sioux on the Milk in July and drove them back into Canada, pursuing them all the way to the border (Ch.4). Even before the main fight with the Sioux, Miles had dealt with the Métis. A preliminary skirmish had taken place near their camp and, discretion being the better part of survival, the Métis had run for the border. Miles, who suspected them of supplying ammunition and intelligence to the Indians, ordered the 300 families detained, and planned to make them stay in the United States.[123] The Métis, however, sent a messenger to Supt. Walsh, who arranged a meeting with Miles on the border (south of Rock Creek). The result of their negotiations was that 130 families who requested to stay in the United States were escorted to Turtle Mountain and the Judith Basin (Lewiston, N.D.) while the balance were released in August and returned to Wood Mountain.[124]

The loss of half of its inhabitants was a severe blow to the Métis community at Wood Mountain, and particularly to the merchants. Legare alone lost $19,000, plus horses and other goods, owed to him by those who did not return.[125] This was not the end of the trouble for, in the fall, the entire Wood Mountain area was burned over by a series of prairie fires. The lack of feed, in combination with that of buffalo, forced a total dispersion. Many Métis moved to the Milk River and the Cypress Hills, few of whom later returned. In December of 1879 a census conducted by Supt. Walsh revealed only 42 families, totalling 304 people, in the vicinity. All but five of these families were located to the east, towards the Big Muddy valley.[126]

The end of the buffalo as a reliable means of subsistence, the decline in police activity after 1879, and a number of lesser problems such as the lack of wood at Wood Mountain forced the leaders of the Métis community to reassess their position. At a New Year's banquet on 1 January 1880 the matter was discussed, and one André Gaudry was able to convince Legare of the need for a change. Specifically, Legare was talked into building a temporary store at "Talle de Saule," better known as Willow Bunch. Once this was done the balance of the Métis in the area (about 30 families) moved to the new site.[127] Supt. Crozier suggested that the main police post be transferred there also, but this was not carried out.[128] The police, however, were the only ones who did not move. In 1881 Willow Bunch became the parish of St. Ignace de Saules, with Father St. Germaine as the first parish priest.[129] Finally, in 1882, J.L. Legare moved permanently to the new settlement, and built a $6000 frame house and two 30 x 20-foot stores to house his business.[130]

The period 1882-83 marked an abrupt change in the character of the Métis community at La Montagne de Bois, one of kind rather than degree. Beginning in 1880 a considerable number of French Canadians began to move to the Willow Bunch area. Among them were many of Legare's relatives, including his brothers and nephews and their families and, later, such prominent families as the Bonneaus. While French Canadians had long been leaders of the Métis community, they now began to make up a substantial part of the 'rank and file' as well.[131] It was also at this time that the last of the buffalo were run down. This enabled the Métis to supply most of the provisions for Regina in 1882-83 but thereafter they had to find other means of employment.[132] Some, in 1883, joined road construction gangs in Regina, but most entered in the buffalo bone trade. These bones, used for fertilizer or sugar refining, were collected in vast quantities in the 1880s. As D.C. McGowan puts it, "The metis desparately needed a product ... which cost nothing to produce and little to harvest."[133] J.L. Legare bought their 'crop' for between $6 and $6.50 per ton. Given his estimate that the Willow Bunch Métis made a total of $200,000 on bones, every man, woman and child in the settlement must have collected an average of about 100 tons apiece between 1882 and 1888.[134]

The fact that the Métis community was still in a state of flux in 1885 probably had a great deal to do with its "loyalty" to the government during the rebellion. In the north, the Métis had already felt the full effects of the 'post-buffalo' economic and political situation for several years. They were poverty-stricken and felt endangered by the newly arrived authority of the Canadian Government, especially in the form of its land surveyors. Louis Riel and his followers had the active support of a substantial part of the population, and these carried the undecided with them. In the Wood Mountain country, however, the situation was markedly different.

The Willow Bunch Métis naturally had strong ties with their friends and relatives in the north. Métis from Batoche and the Battlefords had often lived and hunted with them. Nor was Riel a stranger, having visited the area in 1879 and attempted (unsuccessfully) to turn the Métis and Indians against the government and police.[135] On the other hand, at this location the Métis' misfortunes were less pronounced than elsewhere. The community was small, closely knit and secluded, and had a monopoly on the resources of a relatively large area. Buffalo bones and the remaining game provided a barrier against starvation, slim and temporary as it may have been. Similarly, the Métis were not overly concerned with land claims here.[136] The area had not been cultivated or surveyed, and there seemed to be far more barren prairie available than anyone could possibly want or find a use for. Most importantly, the small community had a strong leadership which favoured the government, and was able to influence it on behalf of the local Métis.

In 1885 J.L. Legare and Father St. Germaine, between them, were able to find profitable work for idle hands.[137] Legare was able to persuade Lt. Gov. Dewdney to provide free seed grain and to hire 45 local men to carry out border patrols (Ch. 3) and, despite the brief opposition of four Métis (including Ambroise Oulette), was able to talk his people into accepting the latter job.[138] While the scouts undoubtedly rendered useful assistance to the police, keeping the men separated and out of trouble was the first consideration. Father Rondeau notes of the Métis on patrol that:

> Their main occupation was to amuse themselves hunting. Well equipped, well nourished, and well paid, they had only to congratulate themselves for having remained loyal subjects of the empire.[139]

Other Willow Bunch Métis found more arduous, but equally profitable work freighting supplies for the police and the army. Supt. Deane of Regina, in his reports, tendered thanks to Father St. Germaine for his assistance in arranging this service.[140]

The local Métis' loyalty in 1885 led to few compensations in the long run. In gratitude for it the Dominion Government did undertake a subdivision survey of the land in the immediate vicinity of their settlements. On 22 April 1886 Jean-Louis Legare petitioned Lt. Gov. Dewdney for this service around Wood Mountain, writing:

> The Wood Mountain Settlers Humbly represent to you that we have been here for many years with the intention to take land, and the great difficulty is because [sic] this part of the country is not subdivided. Please reccomend [sic] the same to be surveyed and oblige about 50 inhabitants.[141]

This was passed on to Ottawa by the Lieutenant Governor with his endorsement, and in May the Surveyor General was "authorized to keep this subject in mind in making ... arrangements for surveys during the coming summer."[142] He apparently did so for, shortly after, J. Bourgeois (D.L.S.) of Trois Rivières, conducted a subdivision survey of the Wood Mountain township (4-3 W3) and of eight townships around Willow Bunch.[143] In addition, the Métis were granted the standard Métis land scrip by the Dominion allowing 160 acres for a married man and 240 acres for a bachelor. This was, of course, meant to be used to take up homesteads in the surveyed areas. However, as Rondeau comments, "The poor Metis, with their usual lack of foresight, did very little with their scripts [sic]. Jean-Louise Legare bought 45 at a price of $140.00 each. The price rose and by 1900 they were worth $1,000.00 each."[144] Very little land was actually taken up, amounting to only 22 quarter-sections as late as 1905 (and none of them in the Wood Mountain township). Almost all of those who homesteaded were French-Canadian settlers rather than Métis.[145]

After 1885 the Métis community in the Wood Mountain country ceased to be a distinctive entity, in any but an ethnic sense. The Métis had to adapt to the economic facts of life, becoming ranchers or farmers (Ch. 3) and had to compete with other settlers in doing so. It was not an easy task for the *hiverants* who, so soon before, had totally specialized in the exploitation of one resource. Individually, the Métis still had a contribution to make, and many have done so, but as a group their day was over. To a large extent, they had been used and discarded. The Métis were the vanguard of the Canadian occupation of the West. They provided the guides and logistic support for "explorers," fur traders and the North West Mounted Police. They were the first to penetrate into unknown areas such as the Wood Mountain country, and it was their settlements and supply lines on which Canadian activities centered and depended until the arrival of the railway. The Métis provided a cushion and means of liaison between whites and Indians which was instrumental in creating a peaceful Canadian West.[146] The history of the Métis community at La Montagne de Bois constitutes an excellent example of the contributions of this group to western development, and of the price which it paid for the honour of expediting Canadian interests.

CHAPTER III THE NORTH WEST MOUNTED POLICE 1874-1918

Introduction

The importance of the North West Mounted Police in the early history of the park area can hardly be exaggerated. The force's association with the Wood Mountain country began in 1874, the year that it moved into the Northwest Territories and continued until 1918, the year it was (temporarily) replaced by the Saskatchewan Provincial Police. During this time a continuous presence was maintained in the park area. Either a permanent post or a detachment was located there in all or part of 42 of the 44 years and, during the two years in which such units were not maintained (1876 and 1884), regular police patrols were carried out from nearby posts. The nucleus of this activity was the police post at Wood Mountain (20-4-3 W3). Located on the site of the Boundary Commission depot of 1874, this (with the partial exception of Edmonton) was the oldest operating police post in the West at the time of its abandonment. At one point - during the Sioux 'invasion' of 1876-81 - the district was the focus of both national and international concern. Historians have naturally, and justifiably, devoted a good deal of attention to the Sitting Bull incident, and to the role of the North West Mounted Police in dealing with it. In terms of the overall history of the park area itself, however, this coverage is misleading. The importance of the police in the Wood Mountain country neither began in 1876 nor ceased in 1881. In fact, there were three distinct stages in North West Mounted Police operations in the area: from 1874 to 1883, from 1885 to 1906, and from 1907 to 1918. Each of these periods had its own unique features, and together they provide an excellent illustration of the variety and variability of the tasks facing the North West Mounted Police in the promotion of western settlement and development.

Sovereignty Patrol 1874-83

The involved story of the origins of the North West Mounted Police is beyond the scope of this study.[1] The primary reasons for its establishment, however, are not. The driving force in the confederation of Britain's North American colonies in 1867 was the threat posed by their southern neighbours. The power of the United States put a premium on collective action. It also made Canadian expansion to the west imperative. As one historian succinctly puts the problem

> no one supposed that the confederation of 1867 could endure as it was, a mere enclave of British territory in a continent dominated by the United States.... Because

> the United States was continental, Canada too had to be continental.[2]

A framework for such expansion already existed. The colony of British Columbia, Rupert's Land and the Northwest Territories were all British territory, the latter via the proprietorship of the Hudson's Bay Company. The foundation for a transfer of the two territories to Canada was laid in the British North America Act of 1867 (Sec. 143) and in the following year a transfer agreement between the Hudson's Bay Company and Canada was reached (the Rupert's Land Act). The problem was that 'ownership' is not the same thing as 'control'.

This was amply demonstrated by the Red River Métis who, not having been consulted about the transfer, declined to join in the union without due negotiation. Their resistance was made possible by the fact that the Canadian presence at Red River was purely nominal in 1869-70. The so-called "Insurrection" led to the creation of the Province of Manitoba. The lessons learned in the process led to the creation of a mounted police force for the Northwest Territories.

It was apparent that an active Canadian presence was needed in these territories as soon as possible after 1870. And it had to be established in advance of the projected transcontinental railway and the settlement accompanying it, in order to prevent unrest; or rather, to prevent the development of a situation which could allow such unrest. Canada simply could not afford (either financially or politically) a repeat of either the Red River situation, or of the anarchy and Indian warfare typical of the American frontier. In a recent study of the North West Mounted Police, R.C. Macleod notes that the police "were an essential although usually unacknowledged part of Sir John A. MacDonald's famous National Policy.... It is not an exaggeration to say that the only possible Canadian West was a peaceful one."[3] In this instance the proverbial "ounce of prevention" was of infinite value, since Canada could not afford the necessary quantity of "cure" after the fact.

Despite its colourful and impressive military trappings, the North West Mounted Police was primarily a police force. The act which created it (on paper) in May of 1873 clearly established this point. No mention of a 'military' character was made. The stated task of the organization was "To perform all duties which now are or shall be hereafter assigned ... in relation to the preservation of the peace, the prevention of crime, and of offences against the laws and Ordinances in force in the North-West Territories, and the apprehension of criminals and offenders and others who may be lawfully taken into custody."[4] The effectiveness of its broad police powers was magnified by the appointment of its officers as territorial magistrates and, later, by the force's willingness and ability to take on a wide range of other civil duties, ranging from the collection of custom's duties to the compilation of vital statistics. Such work continued until settlement and civic development was adequate to provide these services.[5] Its unparalleled powers, and this comprehensive approach to "the preservation of the peace and the prevention of crime" made the North West Mounted Police much more than a police force-cum-military garrison. Very early in its development it became the active agent, and the symbol, of effective Canadian sovereignty in the West.

The operational history of the North West Mounted Police began in the early summer of 1874, when the 300-man force set out from Dufferin on the famous "Long March" under the command of Commissioner G.A. French. The specific purpose of this operation was to end the whiskey trade over and along the newly marked International Boundary and, in particular, to prevent the recurrence of such incidents as the infamous Cypress Hills Massacre of 1873, which had arisen from this trade.[6] These objectives, however, were essentially tactical. The main strategic purpose of the march was to show that the border was more than a row of stone markers across the plains and to put an end to activities which contributed to Indian unrest and white lawlessness.

The incidental hardships of the long march need not be recapitulated here. Suffice it to say that they were those which might have been expected from a group of inexperienced men and unacclimatized livestock attempting to cross hundreds of miles of unmapped, uninhabited and very dry plains in high summer. The police, and particularly their leader, were then and have since been criticized for choosing this route (rather than the established cart trails to the north). But, as R.C. Macleod has pointed out, "the reasons for the nearly disastrous choice of route were not military:" they were political.[7] The police had little choice in the matter, given the task set them and the time available. While it may be true that the difficulties experienced were "largely self inflicted," as he puts it, it is nonetheless apparent that French had planned ahead as much as faulty information and short notice had allowed.[8] In any case, he proved a versatile leader when difficulties arose.

This was shown in regard to two particular points on which French was criticized for his 'lack of foresight' - the supply of feed for livestock, and the specific line of march taken. Both matters were considered by Maj. Gen. E. Selby-Smyth in his confidential report to the Minister of Justice in 1875. He found, in effect, that much of the criticism levelled at French was unjustified. In this report the General noted, first, that "The amount of transport [needed] for oats alone ... can hardly be comprehended by those who have not experience in expeditions of this character." French simply could not have carried the quantities needed for the whole trip. He had, however, made allowances for this, and "from the first calculated on procuring large quantities of supplies from the Boundary Commission, which he subsequently obtained." In the circumstances, this was his only alternative. This foresight, however, was partially negated by the faulty information with which he was provided. To make use of this source of supply, French had intended to follow the Boundary Trail which connected the commission's depots. Selby-Smyth believed that "had he been permitted to do so, he would have been in no want of food for his horses or cattle."[9] The Commissioner was not informed that this trail went south into the United States just before the Missouri Coteau. Since it was politically inadvisable for the heavily armed police column to march through American territory, it was necessary to go north to the next trail across the escarpment - the so-called "Traders' Road" to Wood Mountain. Grass and water were at a premium along this route and, further, French had to rely on his own navigation.[10] This diversion caused a great deal of hardship. It is significant, however, that French re-established contact with the line of Boundary Commission depots as soon as was possible. It was at this point that Wood Mountain entered the picture.

On ascending the Coteau, French's first act was to send Asst.

Commissioner James Macleod and six carts on a reconnaissance mission to Wood Mountain depot. He had decided, at this point, to continue due west, even though this meant leaving the Traders' Road.[11] Macleod returned six days later with 4700 lbs of pemmican and dried meat (possibly purchased from Oulette)[12] and with the welcome information that "the Boundary Commission have oats to spare at Wood Mountain."[13] On August 14 Macleod was again sent to the depot, this time with 16 carts for oats. The commission officer in charge at the Wood Mountain depot was (appropriately enough) L.W. Herchmer, who later became Commissioner of the North West Mounted Police (1886) and played a vital part in the history of the police at Wood Mountain. Herchmer sold Macleod 60,000 bushels of oats, of which 15,000 were immediately carted back to "Cripple Camp" (located where the Wood River flows into Old Wives Lake). French arranged "for the delivery of 20,000 more at the Cripple Camp ... and for the delivery from their trains coming east of 25,000 more."[14] Although the oats were expensive, they were also absolutely indispensable in preparing for the next leg of the trip. As French put it, "Oats, at any price, is [sic] a Godsend to the poor horses." French and Macleod also acquired several new horses from the commission and a local Métis.[15]

Leaving eight men, 26 sick and weak horses, and a dozen wagons at Cripple Camp, the main body of the expedition set out for the Cypress Hills in late August. The column seems to have followed the course of Notukeu Creek, crossing it several times, until the line of march intersected with the "Plain Hunters" trail in the vicinity of the present location of Pontiex. The trail was then followed to the Cypress Hills, apparently on the advice of new guides hired from several parties of Métis which the column had encountered.[16] Along the way, French again dispatched Macleod for oats, this time to the "Boundary Commission Depot at White Mud River" (at Seventy Mile Crossing). Macleod, who left on August 22 with 28 men and 27 carts, returned to the line of march on August 31.[17] It seems probable that French had arranged the transaction with Herchmer before leaving Cripple Camp. The need for these several side-trips to Boundary Commission depots underlines the soundness of French's original plans. Had he been able to follow the commission trail on the border throughout the march a great deal of trouble would, obviously, have been avoided. As it was, French made the best use of these available supplies, with the least waste of time, as was possible under the circumstances. It is also apparent that he was impressed by the strategic location of the commission's depots.

The supplies obtained at the Wood Mountain and White Mud River depots sustained the force, albeit with difficulty, until they reached southern Alberta and were able to get supplies from the United States. Leaving Macleod and three troops (B,C and F) to occupy the area and supress the whiskey trade, French then set out with D and E on the road back to Swan River, the new police headquarters. On the way, the commissioner and a small party left the main column, which was to march by way of Cripple Camp. His purpose was a side-trip to Wood Mountain to get, as he stated in his report, "the depositions of certain parties there relative to a matter which has already been brought to your notice"; meaning, probably, the Cypress Hills Massacre. At the same time, he "purchased the Boundary Commission depot and about seven tons of hay and two corrals for the modest sum of one hundred dollars,"[18] and "arranged for the care of some of our weakest horses for the winter."[19] One of these was a horse abandoned on the trail months before which had been brought into Wood Mountain by one of the Métis.[20] Several others were at Cripple Camp, where French proceeded next. At this camp, he "arranged stores for transport [east], leaving some waggons and gear to be removed to Wood Mountain" along with five horses and one ox. This stock and equipment were put in charge of Sub-Constables T. Mooney and J.E. Richardson. Due to the poor shape which their horses were in, French decided that these two would "have to go to Wood Mountain for the present." This, at least, was the immediate reason.[21]

The availability of the Boundary Commission buildings and stores, and the need to care for his own extraneous equipment, gave French an opportunity and excuse to establish a police post at Wood Mountain. He had reason to believe that one would be useful. When coming through the area on the way out a commission official (probably Herchmer) who had recently been to Fort Benton, warned him "that there were a number of whiskey traders there, and that they stated to him that as soon as the mounted Police left the country they would return."[22] Since this informant was based at Wood Mountain, he was probably including the area in his comments. French's purchase of the depot at Wood Moutain in October seems to indicate that the advice was taken seriously, and that the Commissioner felt that a token force here would not be wasted. When compiling his 1874 Report in January of 1875 French noted that "I have no doubt that a certain amount of liquor traffic will be carried on in the vicinity of the Boundary Line" during the winter, but cited the Cypress Hills as the main area of probable activity.[23] It appears that he considered Wood Mountain (as well as southern Alberta, where the bulk of his forces were left) to be safe. This seems to have been the case, for in March of 1875 a United States Indian agent at the Fort Peck Agency (southeast of the park area on the Missouri) reported that whiskey traders "driven out of the British territory, north, by the Mounted police ... from Whoop Up and Woody Mountain" were becoming a serious problem in his own area.[24] The strategically located two-man post at Wood Mountain in 1874 may have been one of the most cost-effective ever established by the North West Mounted Police.

French's hurried disposition of his forces in 1874 proved to be a fairly practical one, for immediate requirements. In the long term, however, a new arrangement was needed. In particular, a major post in the central area of the border country (in southwestern Saskatchewan) was required as a counterpart to Ft. Macleod in the west. Together, the two would command the better part of the boundary. French's first choice for the new fort seems to have been Wood Mountain. The nucleus of a post already existed, and the presence of the police was already encouraging more hunters and traders to move into the park area. Early in 1875 the Commissioner noted that a sizeable settlement had formed around Wood Mountain, and trade with Fort Benton was growing (thus requiring customs control). More importantly, liquor was apparently being brought into the general area again, and this trade had to be stopped. It was further reported that "Settlements, fed from Wood Mountain, were also forming in a North-Westerly direction towards Edmonton [?]. At a point about 100 miles west and somewhat North was another Settlement called 'Hunter's Settlement', on the South slope of the Cypress Hills, where a large trade in furs was carried on." Based on this information, French apparently recommended that two divisional post (50-man) be established: one at Wood Mountain and one at "Hunter's Settlement" (Eastend). The plan seems to have been tentatively approved but, shortly after, was discarded. The reason for this is not known. A single, larger post in the Cypress Hills was opened instead, perhaps because this was the principal trouble spot at the time: or perhaps, because Wood Mountain was thought to be too isolated, and its local resources too slim to support a major post in the long term.[25]

With the establishment of Ft. Walsh in May of 1875 the Wood Mountain post was considered redundant. The two wintering constables were called in to Walsh in the early summer and, for the next year, the Wood Mountain area was covered by periodic patrols from the Cypress Hills.[26] The stores were also removed, later in the year. In September French "Sent Sub-Inspector Frechette to Qu'Appelle and Wood Mountain to arrange about stores and other matters at both these Places."[27] Sometime during the year one of the buildings, a storehouse, was pulled down by one of the local Métis,[28] and it must have seemed as if Wood Mountain's short career as a police post was over. This situation was soon reversed, however, by events taking place in the south.

The Sioux invasion of 1876 has been discussed in detail elsewhere in this study (Chs. 2 and 4). Discussion of it here will be confined to its effects on the distribution and role of the North West Mounted Police at Wood Mountain. These were considerable. The arrival of the Sioux in 1876-77, fresh from the "massacre" of Custer and his troopers, took the Wood Mountain post from obscurity to international prominence in six months. One of the most significant aspects of the situation which developed in the summer of 1876 was that the North West Mounted Police acted in anticipation of events, rather than in reaction to them. They were on the border, ready to deal with new developments, some time before the Indians arrived. This meant that they were able to treat the Sioux arrival calmly, almost (if not quite,) as a matter of routine. The fact that the well-armed refugees were not treated to the spectacle of an expeditionary force dramatically galloping in after the fact was undoubtedly an important factor in the Sioux' equally calm acceptance of the police's presence, and its authority.

The first warning that the police had of possible trouble came very early, in May of 1876, from the Secretary of State. This derived from a "confidential report" which had been received, outlining the forthcoming operations of the United States Army against the Sioux Nation in Montana. It was feared that these would result in the Indians being driven into Canada; which they might then use as a base for raids into the United States. Their point of arrival, it was thought, "might be somewhere in the vicinity of Wood Mountain" and the Secretary requested that Asst. Commissioner A.G. Irvine "give special instructions to have a sharp look out kept towards Wood Mountain."[29] As it happened, Irvine had anticipated such developments on the basis of his own intelligence, had already ordered Insp. L.N.F. Crozier at Ft. Walsh to send out patrols, and was planning to "take a ride over the country in the vicinity" himself as soon as possible.[30] Meanwhile, in July, Crozier had taken out a 15-man patrol, and apparently had plans underway to refurbish the post at Wood Mountain.[31]

It was obvious that this would soon be needed for, in August, Crozier learned from a Métis informant that Sitting Bull was planning to come north, and had sent scouts to look over the situation. Moreover, a band of Sioux had been reported over the border on the Frenchman River; but by the time Sub. Insp. W.D. Antrobus and a patrol had arrived there the Indians had moved back across the line. Crozier's main problem at this time seems to have been separating fact from rumour, and it is obvious that he was as much concerned about the possible arrival of whiskey traders as with that of the Sioux. In all, the police remained as calm as nervous telegrams from Ottawa would permit, and focused their attention on keeping the immediate situation under firm control.[32]

Patrols - and rumours - continued unabated through the fall of 1876, but it was not until late November that the first Sioux came across the border with the intention of staying. Sub. Insp. Frechette, on patrol in the area, returned to Ft. Walsh in mid-December to report that 57 lodges of United States Sioux had camped near the Wood Mountain post. Insp. James Morrow Walsh, now back in command at Ft. Walsh, reacted immediately and set out for Wood Mountain. By the time he got there on December 21, an additional 52 lodges had arrived. Walsh put the total number of American Sioux at 2900, with 3500 horses and 30 United States Army mules. In addition, 150 lodges of Canadian Santee Sioux were camped four miles east of the old Boundary Commission buildings. Using their chief, White Eagle, as an intermediary, Walsh met with the leaders of the American Sioux. He explained to them "the laws of the country ... as has been our custom in explaining to other Indians, and further told them that they would have to obey them as the Santees and other Indians do." The Sioux assured him that they wanted only peace, would obey the laws, and would not raid on the American side. Walsh accepted this, and arranged for small amounts of ammunition to be made available for hunting.[33]

Walsh's reaction to the first American Sioux was both typical of, and set the pattern for later police dealings with this group. The Indians were to be allowed no special privileges but, at the same time, could expect consistent, impartial and, within limits, sympathetic treatment as long as they followed the guidelines set out for them. By accepting that their promises were made in good faith Walsh, in effect, made the Sioux the principal guarantors of their own good behaviour. The police role thereafter was one of dealing with individuals who, by breaking the clearly defined rules, also broke Sioux promises. To the Indians, the police thus became enforcers of the common good rather than a retaliatory or punitive force as such. Moreover, the police were accepted as the authority defining the parameters of this "common good."[34] This relationship, in large measure, accounts for the ability of a handful of North West Mounted Police officers and men to keep the peace in the Wood Mountain area, while regiments of American soldiers were unable to do so in the south. Granted, they were assisted by the fact that there were few settlers in the vicinity to cause trouble, or against whom the Sioux could retaliate in case of trouble, and by the Sioux fear of the United States Army. On the whole, however, the key to the situation was fair treatment rather than force. As R.C. Macleod notes, in summarizing the causes of the successful resolution of the Sioux situation, "It is sufficient to note that the police used the same techniques to control the Sioux that they had on ... Canadian Indians, thereby avoiding even a single violent incident."[35]

With the arrival of the Sioux, a permanent establishment of some kind at Wood Mountain became necessary. In his December report Walsh accordingly suggested that a "lookout" post of three men be located there. Its line of communication to Ft. Walsh was to be assured by the establishment of a similar post at Eastend and two small "lodges" in between. Significantly, he felt that the main duty of this detachment should be "to take charge of any ammunition arriving there," report on trade and collect custom's duties, and gather intelligence from the Métis.[36] This plan was accepted, and put into effect on 30 January 1877: the post consisting of Const. A.R. Macdonell, two sub-constables and Joseph Morin, a Métis guide and interpreter.[37] All of the policemen were from B Division at Ft. Walsh. By April the line-of-communication posts to Ft. Walsh were also in operation.[38] This was just in time for, with the arrival of spring, American pressure on the Sioux south of the border was renewed.

The first new group to arrive consisted of 57 lodges of Tetons, who came up the Frenchman in mid-March. They were met by Walsh and given the now-routine lecture on conduct, and gave in return the same assurances as Black Moon had in December.[39] In late May the long-expected arrival of Sitting Bull himself finally took place. With 135 lodges of followers he also approached up the Frenchman, camping in the Pinto Butte area.[40] The visitors were met first by Walsh, and then by Asst. Commissioner Irvine and Walsh together. Sitting Bull soon showed his good faith by holding three Americans (envoys of the U.S. commander Gen. Nelson Miles) unharmed until they could be turned over to the police and escorted home. In the following conferences he and his council expounded at length on the injustices done them by the Americans, but promised to conduct themselves peacefully if allowed to stay.[41] While Sitting Bull's attitude was undoubtedly reassuring to the Canadians, however, his adamant refusal to return to the United States was a major stumbling-block. The Canadian Government very much hoped that the Sioux would go home. It feared that its "guests" would come into conflict with Canadian Indians or the United States Army, or both; or that "from a failure of the means of subsistence and from other causes" would become "a very considerable expense." At the same time, it had neither the means nor, apparently, the inclination to force them out of Canada.[42] Although negotiations continued for five years thereafter, this basic impasse remained.

With Sitting Bull now in Canadian territory to stay, for the foreseeable future, a larger detachment was needed at Wood Mountain; although the police continued their practice of keeping the minimum numbers necessary at Wood Mountain, with the main police force in the region concentrated at Ft. Walsh. The presence of Insp. Walsh in the area was required on a full-time basis. By November of 1877 his Wood Mountain unit had grown to 16 men at the main post, and six more at an outpost at Pinto Horse Butte (the nearest line-of-communication "lodge"), with a total of 28 horses.[43] Their quarters were not palatial, by any means. J.P. Turner has described the Wood Mountain post at this time as consisting

> of a mere cluster of log shacks with mud roofs and floors. Furnishings were of the plainest, and the men's beds consisted of hammocks made by stretching buffalo hides between the wall and a row of posts driven into the ground. The staple ration was buffalo meat.[44]

Commenting on the latter item, a veteran of these years wrote,

> Buffalo meat sounds romantic, but to ring the changes from fat cow (very seldom) to tough old bull (very often)

> day after day takes all the romance out of it. Bacon was a treat by comparison, even ... that brand affectionately known as sow-belly and fattened on rattlesnakes.[45]

Despite these trials, the police managed to maintain firm control of the area through the winter of 1877-78.

In the next two years, 1878 and 1879, the situation at Wood Mountain was relatively unchanged. The Sioux would not leave Canada while game was still plentiful but, while this was so, the police had little trouble with them. The buffalo, however, were the cause of a minor incident in the spring of 1878. After a mild winter, early prairie fires burned off much of the range in the vicinity of Wood Mountain, and the herds moved north and west to the South Saskatchewan River. This brought nearly 5000 Sioux and Blackfoot together in pursuit. Alarmed by the possibility of intertribal conflict (or conspiracy), Macleod concentrated his forces at Ft. Walsh. In addition to F. troop from Ft. Macleod, he "thought it advisable to strengthen Fort Walsh still further, and called in the detachment stationed at Wood Mountain." In the event, these precautions proved to be unnecessary, and the post was soon re-established with half of B. troop. New quarters were also erected at this time.[46]

During the summer of 1878 the post took a step towards self-sufficiency. As the Commissioner reported, J.M. Walsh "Has been able, by using the ox-train belonging to the force, and having an extra number of men (5) attached to his detachment, to secure the hay required at that post." This gave Wood Mountain a total of about 22 officers and men, which was increased by another five in the next year.[47] In 1879, also, 14 acres of land were broken and sown with vegetables, barley and oats, with good results. As well, 75 tons of hay were cut by the police and 50 contractors at $3.00 per ton. Of this, however, 25 tons were lost to prairie fires, and a lack of feed forced Walsh to move his oxen and beef cattle to Eastend for the winter.[48] During this same period, a substantial "town" was growing up around the post. In addition to Legare's emporium, several American firms moved in, including Leighton and Jordan (1878), Kendall and Smith (1879), C.A. Broadwater, Cadd, and possibly an agent of T.C. Powers. These traders supplied both the Indians and the large Métis community, which Walsh estimated as 300 persons in four settlements in the vicinity.[49]

As these items indicate, Wood Mountain post was an active and fairly substantial place in the late 1870s. Much of this was due to the Sioux, but its significance was also increasing due to the expansion of settlement in the eastern and northern parts of the territories. Wood Mountain occupied a strategic position astride several of the most important north-south trails crossing the border (Map 7). In 1879 Walsh pointed out that "the Wood Mountain district is certainly one of the principal barriers by which our new settlers in the north ... are made secure and their stock protected against raiding parties from the south." The post covered "that section of the country eastward to the boundary of Manitoba" which would otherwise provide ready access to marauders "if the trails are left clear." Accordingly, he advised that a minimum of 50 men (a troop) were needed "to perform the duty of the district as it should be," and recommended that a new post be constructed capable of holding 75 men at need.[50] These farsighted proposals were not followed through. The fact that they were made, however, indicated that even though the Sioux were the North West

Mounted Police's overriding concern at the moment, they comprised only one part of the larger problem of border security.

During 1878 and 1879 constant patrolling kept trouble at a minimum, most being related to "lost" and stolen horses (27 of which were recovered by the police in 1879). The main problems in the latter year were caused south of the border. In one incident the United States Army attacked a Sioux hunting party on the Milk, and in another it detained 300 families of Canadian Métis. In both cases Walsh met with Gen. Miles and was able to avert further trouble (Chs. 2 and 4); both are indicative of the deteriorating situation at Wood Mountain. Prairie fires and over-hunting were forcing the Métis and Sioux to go further afield to hunt, but the United States Army kept them away from the best areas. As a result, the winter of 1879-80 was extremely difficult for the Indians. In the spring the Sioux began to surrender to the Americans in droves. By May their numbers had been reduced from 450 to 150 lodges, and by the end of the year only Sitting Bull and his personal followers remained. Sitting Bull himself surrendered to the American authorities early in 1881, finally convinced that the Canadian Government would not allow him to remain permanently (Ch. 4).

Supt. Walsh, who had commanded the Wood Mountain area since 1875, was not present for the final act of the Sioux "drama." The official excuse for relieving him in the summer of 1880 was a valid one. The government asserted that "there was an obvious disadvantage in permitting officers and men to remain throughout their entire length of service at one post," and it was decided to institute a two-year rotation system.[51] Accordingly, in July, Walsh and B Division were replaced at Wood Mountain by Supt. Crozier and F. Division, as part of a major reshuffling which took in most of the force and was not completed until December of 1880. Walsh and his men were moved to Qu'Appelle, now a major point of departure for settlers.[52] But, while not a demotion, Walsh's new posting was not a promotion either. It was the result of Sir John A. Macdonald's opinion that "Walsh was deliberately keeping the Sioux in Canada because he enjoyed the publicity his association with Sitting Bull brought him."[53] This charge was almost certainly unfounded, but nonetheless led to the posting and, later, to his being given an "extended leave" from the force (1881) and, in 1883 being forced to resign.[54]

Regardless of its merits, Walsh's removal did mark a new phase in the history of Wood Mountain post. With most of the Sioux gone, large numbers of Canadian Cree and Assiniboine moved into the area.[55] This resulted in a serious increase in intertribal horse theft on both sides and across the border, and to a number of related incidents. Supt. Crozier reported that the Indians "call the boundary the 'Medicine line', because no matter what they have done upon one side they feel perfectly secure after having arrived upon the other." He naturally felt that it was necessary to "Disabuse their minds of any such idea," and noted that as long as the United States Indians were uncontrolled a strong force would be required at Wood Mountain. The police could handle the situation for the moment, but other measures would be required to eradicate the problem.[56] By the end of the year Crozier had 30 officers and men of F. Division under his command. Although this was the largest force that had been stationed at the post to date, he felt it inadequate, and renewed Walsh's appeal for 50. In addition to incessant patrolling, the police had to herd cattle, cut hay and extensively refurbish their quarters. Crozier claimed "The building at present dignified by the name of 'Fort' affords neither proper accommodation, comfort or defence," and major repairs had to be made - even though wood was so scarce locally that he suggested that Willow Bunch might be considered as the site for a new post, if one was to be built.[57]

The reluctance of the North West Mounted Police command to rebuild Wood Mountain post was the natural result of the prevailing uncertainty of the period. In the past two or three years major changes had taken place, and more could be expected. The buffalo herds were a thing of the past, and the imminent arrival of the Canadian Pacific Railway made a waiting policy a wise one. For the moment, the police were occupied with the task of controlling Canadian Indians along the border, and encouraging them to move away from it to the reserves assigned to them.[58] These efforts were partially successful in 1881, and totally so by 1883.

At Wood Mountain, Crozier, was replaced by Insp. A.R. Macdonell in June of 1881,[59] and the detachment was reduced in size to 19 men. Commissioner Irvine, as part of a wider redistribution, proposed (subject to the location of the final route of the C.P.R.) to reduce the post manpower still further in the following year, and to control it from Qu'Appelle.[60] The latter was necessary since he intended to abandon Ft. Walsh at the first opportunity. These changes were duly carried out. In July of 1882 Wood Mountain, still commanded by Macdonell, again became part of B. Division. The Inspector's staff was reduced to eight men[61] and they were kept very busy. Aside from the usual round of patrols, they had to watch the Cree and Assiniboine, chase horse thieves, and deal with a band of Cree who had assaulted Jean-Louis Legare.[62] One indicator of the size of their workload was that $1076.50 of custom's duties were collected on $13,522.00 worth of goods imported through Wood Mountain. At the same time they had to maintain, and put up with, a post which the commissioner described as "unfit to quarter men and horses." His recommendation for a new post was again ingored.

The year 1883 marked the end of the first phase of North West Mounted Police operations at Wood Mountain. During the early summer Fort Walsh was closed and, shortly after, so was Wood Mountain. The commissioner found it "utterly uninhabitable," but could not spare the men and material to rebuild it. The Canadian Pacific Railway was absorbing all of the force's attention. One corporal was left to guard stores until fall, when Insp. Macdonell returned "with a view to ascertaining what was going on in that section of the country," and to dispose of the remaining goods and equipment. With these last details taken care of, the post was abandoned.[63]

Aside from the call of new duties, the main reason for the abandonment of Wood Mountain post by the North West Mounted Police was that they had fulfilled their original purpose in occupying the border country. The Indians had been held in check until, and treaties signed before, the arrival of settlers in the West. The Cree, Assiniboine and Blackfoot (and Santee Sioux) were now settled on reserves comfortably removed from the border, as were most American Indians on their side, and a relative calm had descended. There was still some horse theft, and whiskey-running, but neither was significant for the moment. In short, the police had succeeded in turning the imaginary line of the

49th Parallel into a legitimate "frontier" in just nine years. The fact that effective Canadian law enforcement had existed north of the line removed any excuse which the Americans might otherwise have had for moving in before settlement gave Canada a concrete claim to the West. Moreover, the police had paved the way for settlement. Their posts, including Wood Mountain, had served as the nuclei of commercial and other activity which sped the transition from a subsistence to a money economy. Lastly and perhaps most importantly, the police had established what one historian has called "a tradition of orderly government."[64] They had rigorously suppressed any vestige of lawless behaviour which might have lingered from before, or attempted to transplant itself during their tenure. This foundation having been laid, the North West Mounted Police turned its attention to more mundane, if no less burdensome problems.

Border Security 1885-1906

With the opening of its second decade of corporate existence, North West Mounted Police operations entered a new phase. The "sovereignty patrol" of the past was no longer adequate to meet the demands imposed by the arrival of the Canadian Pacific Railway and the settlers accompanying it. The main North West Mounted Police goal had now to be the protection of property and public order in an increasingly large, widespread and complex society. In order to provide the comprehensive protection which the public demanded (and had become accustomed to), optimum use had to be made of police manpower and of the new devices (such as the railway and telegraph) which were now available.[65] Although the border areas were themselves largely unsettled, and remained that way for some 30 more years, they were important to the security of those that were. A police *cordon sanitaire* south of the main Canadian Pacific Railway line would deny sanctuary and passage to lawbreakers and would-be lawbreakers from north and south alike and so, by its very existence, deter crime in the territories as a whole.

The first suggestion of Wood Mountain's place in such a scheme came from Commissioner A.G. Irvine, in his 1884 Annual Report. While the strategic location of the old post had not escaped him earlier,[66] an improved method of using it to its advantage had now become available. His immediate problem was an upsurge in "rampant horse stealing" along the border "by white men, half-breeds and Indians." In 1884 Métis settlers in the vicinity of Wood Mountain "suffered losses constantly, and many were driving their horses northward as a precaution."[67] This type of crime to a greater or lesser degree, remained the main police problem for the next 20 years. Irvine noted,

> it is clear that the prospects of intercepting horses and thieves, except by means of strong detached parties along the frontier, is very slight ... communications, to be effective, must be more rapid than is at present possible. I have therefore advocated the re-establishment of a post at Wood Mountain; which I propose should be the Headquarters of a strong division connected by telegraph with Regina.[68]

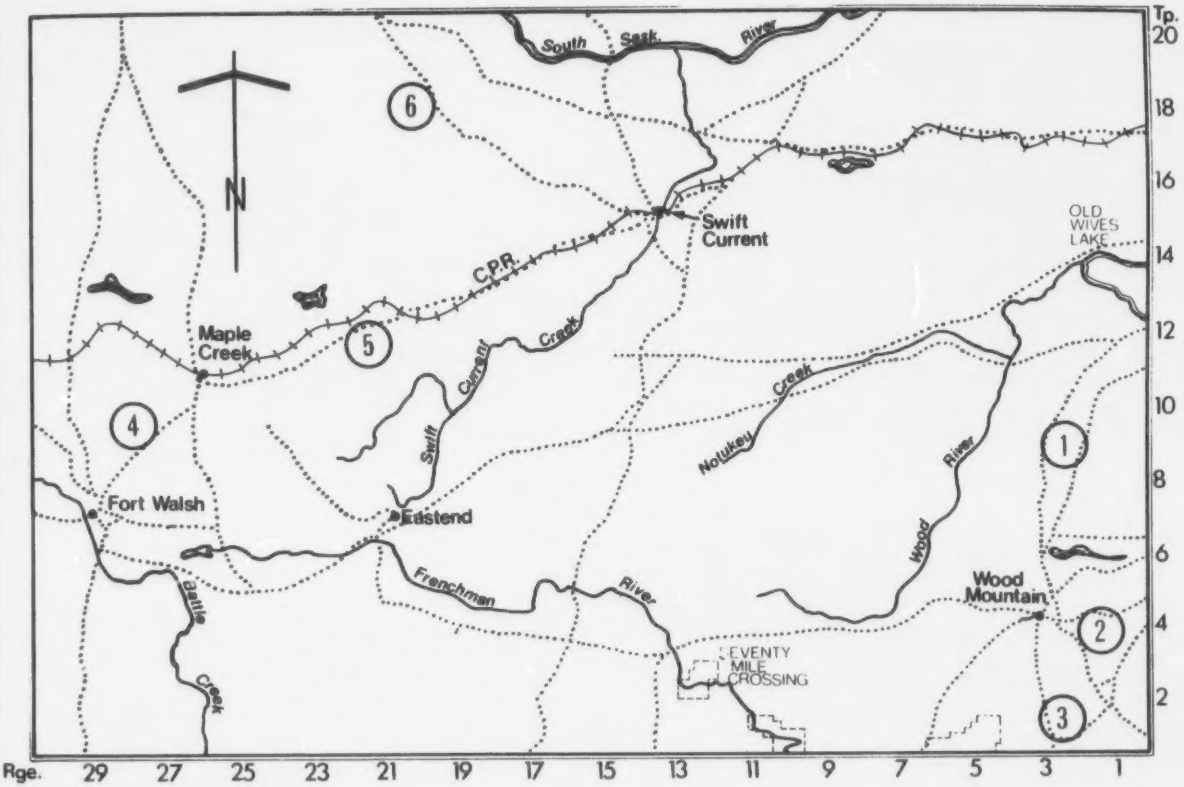

N
South Sask. River
6
C.P.R.
Swift Current
OLD WIVES LAKE
Maple Creek
5
Swift Current Creek
Notukeu Creek
Wood River
4
1
Fort Walsh
Eastend
Frenchman River
Battle Creek
Wood Mountain
2
EVENTY MILE CROSSING
3
Tp.
20
18
16
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
Rge.
29
27
25
23
21
19
17
15
13
11
9
7
5
3
1
mi. 0 6 12 18

FIG.8 Southwestern Saskatchewan: Trails and Communications in 1885

(New trails only; existing network, Map 7.)

1. Wood Mountain to Moose Jaw; "Old Pole Trail" and telegraph line
2. Wood Mountain to Willow Bunch
3. Wood Mountain and Willow Bunch to Glasgow, Mont.
4. Ft. Walsh to Maple Creek
5. Maple Creek to Swift Current and Regina
6. Swift Current to Battleford

The detachment was to patrol the border from Wood Mountain to Manitoba, and was to be linked with a similar patrol line working out of Maple Creek in the Cypress Hills. This, in a nutshell, was the rationale and basic structure of police operations in the area until after the turn of the century. From the tone of his report, Irvine intended to set up such a system the next year. The events of 1885, however, changed the timing of his project.

The Métis community in the Willow Bunch-Wood Mountain area was one of the few in the territories which did not join Riel (Ch. 2) - luckily for those who were trying to put down the insurrection. Nonetheless, the rebellion caused a flurry of police activity in the district. In order to ensure freedom of action in the north, it was necessary to interdict the much-travelled routes from the South Saskatchewan to the Missouri. This would prevent supplies and reinforcements from coming up, and fugitives from escaping. Overall, it was important that the border be kept quiet to protect settlers from opportunistic outlaws and to demonstrate to the Americans that the situation was under control - Riel's claims of independence and his initial military success notwithstanding.

Rather ironically, the first steps towards implementing these goals were taken by the Willow Bunch Métis, led by J.L Legare. On hearing of the Duck Lake fight, Legare promptly formed a 60-cart train loaded with dried meat and furs and set out for Swift Current.[69] The approach of the train to the town caused a minor panic, but Legare's reputation soon remedied this, and his request for employment for the Métis was well received by Lt. Gov. Dewdney. Accordingly, six were hired as guides for Col. Otter's column, many were taken on as teamsters, and a large number (varying from 30 to 45) were engaged as scouts to patrol the Wood Mountain county for $1.00 per day. The latter were personally selected by Legare, who "undertook to see that the work was properly done, and to vouch for the good faith of the men whom he would employ." Teamsters, guides and scouts alike served faithfully throughout the rebellion. As Insp. Deane of Regina noted, hiring the Métis scouts "fulfilled the double purpose of finding work for 'idle hands to do', and having the [border] country thoroughly watched."[70]

As soon as eastern military reinforcements took some of the presure off the police, plans were made to send a detachment to Wood Mountain. The first requirement was a small unit to organize and direct the Métis. Insp. A.R. Macdonell, then at Medicine Hat, was the obvious choice for this duty, and was despatched with four men in mid-April.[71] Then, when large drafts of new police recruits arrived in the West, more were sent. In mid-May 20 mounted men arrived at Wood Mountain from Regina. These were used to "form an inner line of outposts to act on any information that might be received from the line of half-breed scouts."[72] Finally, in July, an additional 16 men arrived.[73] This gave Wood Mountain (or, rather, the Wood Mountain patrol line from the Manitoba border to the Frenchman River) a total of 41 police officers and men, and an equal number of Métis scouts.

The size of this unit gives some idea of the importance attached to the security of the Wood Mountain area; as does the fact that the telegraph line proposed by Irvine in 1884 was hurriedly built at this time. This line ran from Moose Jaw to Wood Mountain and a police telegrapher, J.S. Macdonald, was placed at the post.[74] In addition, "for experimental purposes, telephones, probably the first to reach the

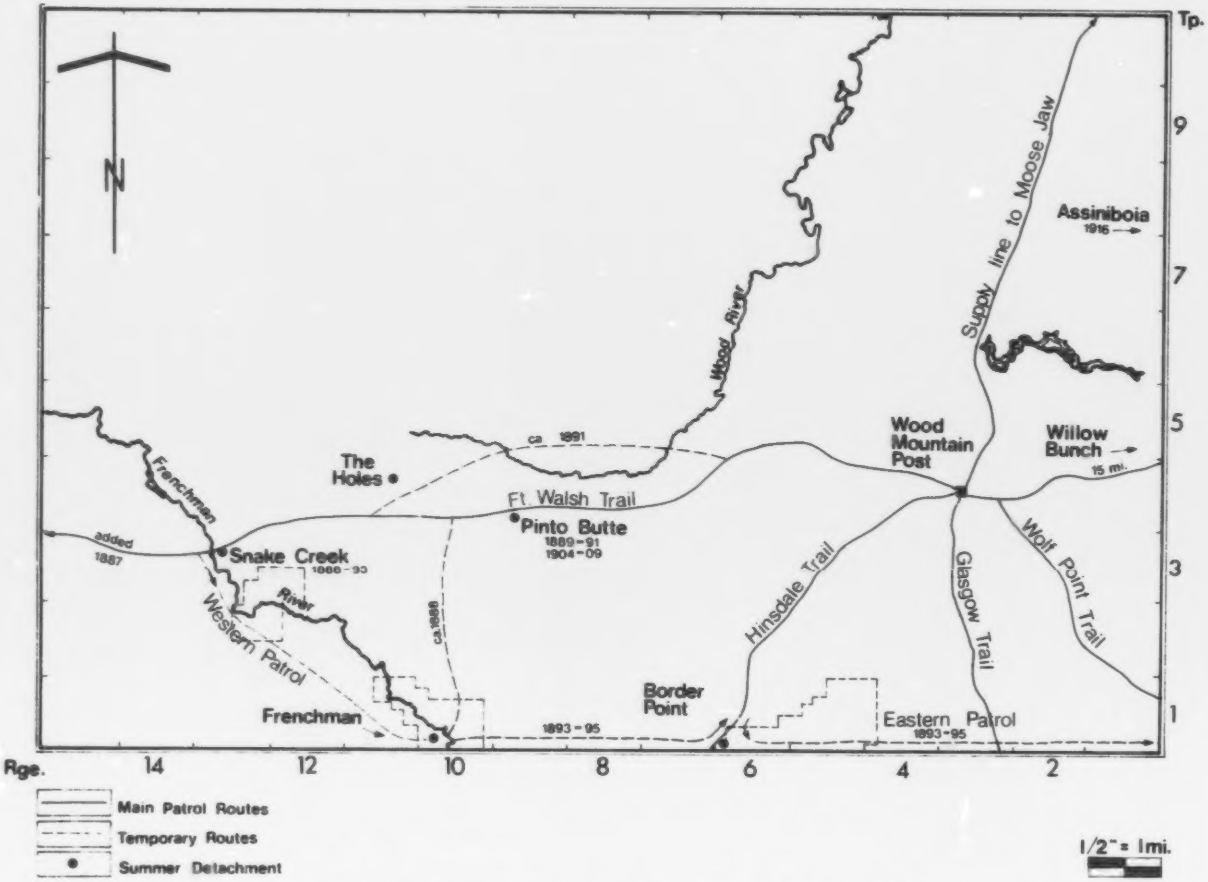

Tp.
9
7
5
3
1
Rge.
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
N
Assiniboia
1916 →
Supply line to Moose Jaw
Wood River
Wood Mountain Post
Willow Bunch →
15 mi.
ca. 1891
The Holes
Frenchman
Ft. Walsh Trail
Pinto Butte
1889-91
1904-09
added
1887
Snake Creek
1886-93
River
ca.1888
Hinsdale Trail
Glasgow Trail
Wolf Point Trail
Western Patrol
Border Point
Frenchman
1893-95
Eastern Patrol
1893-95
Main Patrol Routes
Temporary Routes
Summer Detachment
1/2" = 1mi.

FIG. 9 Park Area: NWMP Stations and Patrols, 1886 - 1918

plains" were installed on the line, the honour of making the first call being given to two rather bemused Sioux.[75] Unfortunately, the loosening of government purse-strings did not extend to new buildings and, as Irvine pointed out, the telegraph line is of little value until the post is [permanently] established. I beg to repeat my recommendations of former years.... The reason for these recommendations do not now need further repetition."[76] Despite its handicaps, the post proved invaluable during the rebellion. The best index of its success was the absence of any serious incidents along the border. Macdonell promptly responded to any suggestion of trouble in his sector with sizeable flying columns, and placed outposts to prevent any recurrences.[77]

If there were any doubts remaining about the value of the post at Wood Mountain, they were dispelled by the end of 1885. The post itself, and the emergency patrol system, however, were both inadequate - the one being uninhabitable and the other an over-staffed improvization. Both defects were soon corrected by the new commissioner, L.W. Herchmer. Formerly the Boundary Commission commisariat officer in 1874, Herchmer was quite familiar with the strategic location of Wood Mountain and the nature of the country. One of his first acts after his appointment in 1886 was to begin work on a comprehensive patrol system "to secure the safety of the frontier ... between the Manitoba boundary and the Rocky Mountains."[78] As R.C. Macleod has noted, patrols were hardly a new experience for the North West Mounted Police. Herchmer's approach, though, was innovative in that he recognized the importance of a systematic approach; "As long as one gap existed in the patrol network the rest were ineffective."[79] Herchmer placed a strong emphasis on maintaining a constant and regular presence, and on gathering and distributing information. The latter was organized through a tight system of daily, monthly and patrol reports from all detachments. Wood Mountain provided the eastern anchor of this patrol network and sytem, beginning in 1886.

The Wood Mountain detachment was withdrawn in the winter of 1885-86 due to the state of the post buildings. Periodic winter visits, however, were made and, on one occasion, 45 stolen American horses were recovered.[80] The post had come under the control of Regina (B Division) in 1885, and from 1886 on Wood Mountain was the summer headquarters for the division. In April, Supt. S. Gagnon arrived with 27 officers and men. A further 17 were stationed at Moose Mountain and 13 at Willow Bunch. Each post conducted patrols of the territory to its south and west. Thus, from Wood Mountain, a six-man weekly patrol covered the Ft. Walsh trail as far as Seventy Mile Crossing, where it met a similar easterly patrol from Maple Creek (A Division), and daily patrols covered the two major trails to the southeast (the Poplar River trail to Wolf Point and Malta) and southwest (the Cart Coulee Trail to Hinsdale, formerly part of the Boundary Commission trail) as far as the border (Map 7, and Appendix C). The weekly police supply train to Moose Jaw covered the Old Pole trail. These north-south patrols were particularly important, due to the great increase in movement to and from the United States after 1885. The standard police policy was to interview and search each and every party using the trails. Supt. Gagnon reported that "these patrols were very trying, both to men and horses, on account of the extreme heat and the scarcity of water." But they were also very effective, since no livestock at all was stolen during the patrol season and, although other crimes were slightly up, "few of the offenders in this district ... escaped punishment."[81] After this arduous summer's work, the bulk of the detachment returned to Regina for the winter, leaving six men at Wood Mountain (in rented buildings) and two at Willow Bunch.[82]

During the first full year in operation the comprehensive patrol system proved to be an unqualified success. The basic patrol routes out of Wood Mountain, established by Gagnon, were to remain the standard ones for the next 20 years (although the degree of coverage varied with the manpower available.) The pattern of large summer and small winter detachments was also carried on. Experience showed that winter conditions in the border country generally served to keep the worst side of human nature in check, most of the common crimes in the area being outdoor activities. The requests for winterized buildings sufficient to hold a full detachment did not cease, but apparently were not very convincing to the 'powers that be' when the probable cost was set against seasonal crime statistics.[83]

Instead, the police at Wood Mountain made do with small buildings for stores and offices (and, later, quarters for officers and N.C.O.'s) and with permanent stables. The men lived under canvas in the summer, and the few buildings were adequate to hold all of the wintering detachment. Construction of new facilities began in the fall of 1887, when a 50 x 18-foot frame building and a 50 x 16-foot log stable were put up. These were located 300 yards southeast of the old post, on a higher terrace above Wood Mountain Creek.[84] The move was due to "the low marshy situation [of the old post], and the rotten state of the old log buildings," which were then 15 years old. These factors had contributed to an outbreak of "typho-malarial" fever in October, and Supt. E.W. Jarvis recommended that the old buildings "should be destroyed forthwith."[85]

Further additions were made to the new post the next year. These included 50 x 18-foot and 20 x 18-foot log buildings, for use as a storehouse and blacksmith shop, respectively. Also, a 200 x 16-foot dugout stable was built on the slope west of the fort.[86] In 1889 several lean-tos were constructed for various purposes, and a small building purchased from the N-N Ranch was moved onto the site.[87] These buildings were supplemented, in 1891 with a police-built 18 x 20-foot log annex and a reconstructed dugout stable. The latter, which had an unfortunate tendency to cave in at regular intervals, was finally abandoned in 1899.[88] These buildings, while not ideal due to the constant maintenance and refurbishing required to keep them habitable,[89] served the detachment for 30 years.

In addition to construction and maintenance, a number of other domestic duties made demands on the constables' time. These included freighting supplies (until 1888), repairing vehicles, the constant care of horses, and caring for the grounds, to name only a few jobs. For some reason annual requests for a simple fence to keep stray cattle out of the post were never approved.[90] Obtaining sufficient fuel and fodder was a constant problem, especially the first. In 1889 it was reported that "the supply of firewood at Wood Mountain has practically come to an end.... For the last two months there were twenty-one fires constantly going at Wood Mountain alone, and it was a heavy tax on the resources of the division to keep them supplied."[91] Post commanders frequently suggested that a police coal mine be opened up (this having been done for a short time around 1885) but, once again, the request was not granted.[92] Generally speaking, fodder for livestock was less of a problem, but a scramble for hay in the fall was part of the normal routine. As can be seen, simply maintaining a post at Wood Mountain was not an easy job. Until the turn of the century the North West Mounted Police had to either haul in much of their required food and equipment from Moose Jaw, or make or find it for themselves locally. The former was expensive and the latter time-consuming, but alternative sources of supply (except for meat) were simply not available for the better part of this period.

Given the amount of internal business which had to be taken care of, it is a wonder that any time was left for police work. As long as the manpower was available, however, regular patrols were kept up, and even when it was not every effort was made to ensure the best possible coverage. As this caveat suggests, there were several distinct phases in police operations at Wood Mountain in the period 1886-1906.

In most years, the patrol season ran from mid-May to early November. During this time activities included regular daily and weekly patrols, "flying" or irregular ones, and outpost duty. The frequency and route or location of these varied considerably. From 1886-94 a full schedule was maintained. Patrols covered the basic network laid out by Gagnon in 1886, with a 15-mile extension west of the Whitemud after 1887.[93] In addition, permanent or semi-permanent outposts were maintained at Willow Bunch (1886-95), Snake Creek (Seventy Mile Crossing 1888-93) and Pinto Butte (1889-91),[94] and flying patrols were a standard practice after 1890.[95] The police were able to keep up this schedule thanks to the relatively large size of the detachment. This ranged from 23 officers and men in 1894, to 42 in 1888 (not counting Willow Bunch, which had between 4 and 12 men each year at this time); and additional manpower was acquired when needed by hiring Indian and Métis scouts.[96] The intensive patrol coverage produced exactly the results desired. In several years during the period the comment in the "Crime" section of the annual report from Wood Mountain was a variation of "none" or "no crime at all" in the district. Such was the absence of malfeasance that 1892, when three very minor offences were recorded, stands out like a sore thumb.

The lack of criminal activity along the border was appreciated by Americans as well as Canadians. When Insp. Primrose from Wood Mountain visited Montana in 1892 he reported that "our 'patrol system', as a preventive to the frontier becoming a harbour of refuge for horse thieves, murderers and other criminals" had the "unqualified approval" of American officials, and "they were good enough to state that they themselves derive almost as much benefit from it as the North-West Territories."[97] It may be, however, that this statement soon came to have a slightly hollow ring to the police at Wood Mountain. In 1892 Insp. Primrose also reported that "the present patrol route will have to be followed at the beginning, at any rate, of next season, no better route having so far been found."[98] The reason for this uncertainty was the large numbers of American cattle which were starting to drift north over the border. These had to be rounded up and turned back, both to protect Canadian grass and water and to maintain the quarantine against diseases which afflicted many American range cattle.[99]

In 1898 Supt. A.B. Perry of B Division reported that "At Wood Mountain our men are found acting as cowboys" expelling "vast herds of wild American ranch cattle, which again and again wander northwards."[100] To do this, in addition to regular duties, it was soon necessary to alter patrol routes. The officer in charge of the Wood Mountain detachment that summer, Supt. F. Norman, rearranged both the western and southern weekly patrol routes to describe large loops, half of which ran along the border. The western patrol to Snake Creek, instead of doubling back to Wood Mountain, was to follow the Whitemud southeast to the border, then follow the line east to Cart Coulee and the Hinsdale Trail, and then turn north to Wood Mountain. This covered the most important segment of the border, but was not entirely satisfactory. Not only was the country very broken, making both travel and herding difficult, but cattle would wander back north in between patrols. As a partial remedy, a temporary outpost was stationed at the border of the Hinsdale Trail (at about 6-1-6 W3). The border east of this point was covered by the southern patrol, which also moved from west to east each week.[101] While the police were fairly successful in controlling the 'invasion' it was, as Supt. Perry aptly put it, "an almost superhuman task in the Wood Mountain district." For example, on an inspection tour in 1894 he saw an American roundup crew on the Whitemud with 250 cattle. These had been wandering in the north for three months undetected, having gotten past the patrol line during the winter.[102] Without a full-strength winter detachment at Wood Mountain, this part of the problem could not be corrected, and some American cattle came as far north as the post itself during the winter.[103] As late as 1896, 1100 head of United States stock were reported in the Wood Mountain area in the spring.[104]

Fortunately for the police, their problems with wandering American cattle began to diminish after this date. By 1898 Supt. Howe was able to report that "The American cattle have not given us any trouble of late."[105] This was fortunate because, beginning in 1895, the North West Mounted Police had serious manpower problems. In 1894 its total strength was cut from 1000 to 750 men, and after 1895 the demands of Yukon gold rush duty gradually reduced the force available for the territories by a third.[106] At Wood Mountain the result was a decline in the size of the detachment from 23 officers and men in 1894, to eight in 1895 and to only three in 1898. It stayed at this level thereafter, especially as men were drawn off for service in South Africa after 1899. The outpost at Willow bunch, which had five men in 1894, was eliminated after 1895 (except for a one-man outpost in 1899), as were all of the smaller outposts. From 1897 - the year that it ceased to be a subdistrict headquarters - to 1900 the Wood Mountain detachment consisted of only three or four men, commanded by a staff sergeant and remained at the post year-round without summer reinforcement.[107]

In 1895 and 1896 the eight-man detachment managed, somehow, to keep up fairly regular patrols.[108] With further reductions, however, this became impossible. In 1899 St. Sgt. L. Watson reported that "Patrols were made when necessary. Owing to not having sufficient men, the regular patrols were not kept up," and this remained the case until 1902.[109] Given these circumstances, and increase in crime in the area would not have been too surprising but such did not occur. Despite the reductions, the police retained complete control. This was not due to lack of civilian activity in the area. In 1899, for example, many new settlers were reported, and 2156 horses passed through the post's quarantine station (Ch. 6); yet, in the same year, only one criminal case was reported, and the horse thief involved was apprehended and prosecuted.[110] One reason for the peace which prevailed was undoubtedly the good relations which the detachment had with the established ranchers in the vicinity, due to the regular visits by patrols, the social activities sponsored at the post and, of course, the services rendered by police in protecting the range.[111] Such law-abiding citizens, however, rarely caused trouble in any case. The key to the North West Mounted Police's success in the period 1895-1901 lay in the strong impression which the police had made previously on the restless border country. As one historian has put it, "the tradition and reputation of the police sustained them until the boom."[112]

By the turn of the century, a sizeable ranching community was established in the park area (Ch. 6). This, and perhaps the late decline in North West Mounted Police numbers, began to attract organized bands of American horse thieves across the border. In 1902 there were a number of disturbing reports of armed men at several points along the boundary from Willow Bunch to Snake Creek. Supposedly these were members of the "Jones Gang." Insp. La Rocque of Wood Mountain had only a small detachment, but was quickly reinforced from Regina to a strength of 16 men.[113] With this larger force, which stayed throughout the winter, it was possible to re-establish the regular patrol network. For once, though, this did not bring the desired results. The police were dealing with professional thieves who easily avoided them in the badlands (and by crisscrossing the border), and who succeeded in terrorizing some, at least, of the local inhabitants. Although the police apprehended two other rustlers,[114] the Jones Gang remained out of reach. Insp. Wilson of Regina noted that "for some time it will be necessary to keep a strong force in the Wood Mountain district."[115]

This prediction proved to be accurate. For the next five years police strength at Wood Mountain remained at or above the 1902 level, reaching a high of 20 in 1905[116] - not counting the two or three special constables employed each year.[117] Patrolling was increased again in 1903 and a four-man outpost was established at Pinto Butte. In 1904 a telegraph line was put in between Wood Mountain and Willow Bunch. The results of these measures were termed "most satisfactory" by Insp. Wilson but he was referring to general conditions rather than the special problem at hand. The incidence of ordinary crime (never high) fell off sharply after the patrols were reinstated, but the Nelson and Jones Gang remained active and at large. As the revised name indicated, this "band of horse thieves and outlaws" actually increased in numbers in 1903 (by three). Wilson noted that "These men are desperate characters, and being in collusion with a number of ranchers on the American side of the line, it will be some time before they are rounded up." The gang was credited with murder, robbery and kidnapping in Montana, but since American officials were doing nothing to stop them there was little the police could do but wait until a provable crime was committed in Canada.[118]

Their opportunity to take action against the gang finally came in 1904. The year before, a Montana cowboy by the name of "Dutch" Henry Leuch had been put in charge of wintering 250 horses on the American side for Pascal Bonneau of Willow Bunch. On going to collect them in the spring Bonneau was threatened, and both Dutch Henry and the horses disappeared. In October of 1904, however, Leuch's accomplice Edward

Shufelt was apprehended in Canada in possession of several of the horses. The police, and later the court, did not accept Shufelt's rather flimsy explanations. After a trial which involved unsuccessful attempts to intimidate local witnesses, Shufelt received a five-year sentence.[119]

In the meantime Dutch Henry had joined the Jones Gang, and was apparently involved in a kidnapping in the Wood Mountain area[120]; however, Shufelt's conviction broke its back and the gang dispersed shortly thereafter. In 1906 Supt. G.E. Sanders at Regina reported that "the principals ... of these gangs are now dead, and the notorious Dutch Henry was murdered by a friend last December." Sanders strongly recommended a reduction in the size of the Wood Mountain detachment, as a result.[121] Two years later, there was a minor revival of horse thievery in the area, but this was swiftly dealt with by the local police without extraordinary measures being needed. They were assisted by a public-spirited citizen of Ambrose, N.D., who "potted" one of the suspects from his window while said suspect was "engaged in the harmless occupation of shooting up the town", as Supt. Sanders dryly put it.[122]

This brought Wood Mountain's great crime wave to an end. It is readily apparent that the incident had more colour than content. Of particular interest is the horrified reaction of the police and ranchers to the very idea that the Wild American West was creeping across the border to disturb the King's peace. Without underestimating the difficulties of policing the border country, it is probably safe to say that both parties overreacted to the threat posed by the handful of rather inept desperadoes involved, which was serious only in contrast to the preceding period of absolute peace and order. The incident, however, is a good illustration of the police policy of taking immediate and thorough action against any challenge whatsoever to their authority along the sparsely settled border. The issue at stake was not a few horses, but the reputation of the force. As such, the extirpation of the Nelson and Jones Gang was a fitting close to North West Mounted Police activity at Wood Mountain during the ranching era.

Supervising Settlement 1906-18

The patrol network of 1886-1906 was specifically designed to deal with the small, widely spaced and highly mobile population of the border country at that time. The police force which implemented it was also small and mobile, and had comprehensive powers and wide jurisdiction; the latter being necessary in that the police were the only active representative of the government along the border. Since it was so closely adapted to these conditions, it was inevitable that the role and methods of the force would change when they did. As the Wood Mountain area was opened up to intensive agricultural settlement and development after the turn of the century, the need for the police brand of government rapidly diminished.

The main concern of the Wood Mountain detachment in the period 1902-6, American immigrants began to pour across the border into Canada, and many used the Wood Mountain port of entry. At first, imported stock constituted the main traffic, but settlers' effects and supplies gradually increased in significance. In 1904, 907 horses were examined and entered, and mange-dipping vats and corrals were erected at the post. In the next year, the police collected $495.45 for the Department of Agriculture on the 1080 horses and 162 cattle brought in, but $7179.20 in custom's duties were also assessed. In 1906 the figures rose to $774.57 in fees on 2253 horses, 112 cattle and 792 sheep, and $17,205.68 in custom's duties.[123] This flurry of activity was only a prelude to greater changes, since it did not affect the detachment's primary duties in the district as a whole.

The watershed in the history of the police at Wood Mountain came in 1908, with the opening of the area to homesteading (Chs. 6, 7 and 8). Settlers began scouting the district in 1906, in anticipation of this event and the construction of a railway.[124] By 1908, actual settlement was well underway in the Wood River area, and only six years later the officer in command was able to report that "this district is now pretty well settled and practically all open land has been taken up, either by homesteaders or having been leased to ranchers."[125] Paradoxically, this increase in population meant a great reduction in the duties required of the detachment. In effect, the need to be 'all things to all people' was removed. In 1913, for example, the Customs Department took over the collection of duties at Wood Mountain, it having become too big a job to be dealt with as a sideline by the police.[126] This was also the case for other peripheral activities, such as weather reporting. The problem of supplying and maintaining the post was simplified, for more local goods and services were available. Most importantly, the need for constant patrolling was all but eliminated, due to the intensive nature of agricultural settlement and its extent. With neighbours to watch and assist each other, law-abiding citizens everywhere to provide information, and with municipal organizations to take over the everyday details of government, the constant presence of the force was not generally required.[127] In any case, improved communications made it relatively easy to call in the police at need, and for them to reach most points in the park area quickly.

As the post at Wood Mountain became less a centre of government and more a simple police station, the size of the detachment stabilized at about ten men (1907-13) and then began to shrink, to six in 1914 and three in 1916. When the war broke out in 1914 the number of enemy aliens in the district (mostly Austrians) caused some concern, but it was soon found that they were "quietly and diligently pursuing their vocations as farmers" and, in any case, were closely watched by their neighbours.[128] The *coup de grace* for the Wood Mountain post came in 1916, when the completion of the Assiniboia-Shaunavon Canadian Pacific Railway line put it in a backwater. Assiniboia became the headquarters for the district. When the Royal North West Mounted Police contract with Saskatchewan was cancelled in 1917, due to a lack of police manpower during the war, the Wood Mountain detachment was reduced to a two-man alien-and-border "patrol," which was halved in 1918. In 1919, with a major reshuffling of the forces, the then-empty Wood Mountain post was finally eliminated from the table of organization.[129]

Conclusion

The North West Mounted Police were sent west in 1874 for one specific purpose: to prepare the way for Canadian settlement. Due to its strategic location, Wood Mountain was one of the first police posts established. At the same time, however, the area which it controlled offered few advantages for the type of agricultural settlement then possible, or thought desirable. As a result, the time required for 'preparation', locally, was in the order of 30 years. During this period the chief task of the police detachment in the park area was to maintain the integrity of the boundary. There were two distinct phases in this.

From 1874 to 1883, the main concern was to demonstrate and maintain effective Canadian sovereignty north of the "Medicine Line," at a time when the West was Canadian in little more than name. This was achieved by means of a rigorous, consistent and impartial application of Canadian law for Indians, Métis and whites alike, but the main emphasis was placed on deterring rather than simply punishing criminal activity. This tradition was carried over into the next phase. From 1886 to 1906, after the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway main line had linked the West into the Canadian economic system, the main concern was to provide security for northern and local settlement. A systematic network of patrols was used to deter criminal activity by ensuring that any movement in or through the border country would be for lawful purposes. The impression made while the system was in full operation in 1885-94 was such that a skeleton detachment was able to maintain the status quo when manpower was at a premium in 1895-1901. By the latter date ranching was well underway in the Wood Mountain country, and it was necessary to re-establish the patrol network to deal with purely local problems.

In the last period of its existence, from 1907 to 1918, the task of the Wood Mountain detachment was to supervise the process of agricultural settlement in the park area, providing internal and external security. Since, by this time, the conditions necessary for orderly settlement had been provided, a progressive reduction in police duties was an intrinsic part of the process. In effect, the North West Mounted Police had 'held the line' in the park area until such time as development elsewhere in the West made the land valuable for agricultural purposes, *faute de mieux*. In that their long occupation of the border was one of the factors contributing to this development, it might be said that the police detachment in the Wood Mountain district played a vital role in increasing the relative value of the park at Wood Mountain throughout the entire span of its existence as a territorial police force, emphasizes the essentially marginal nature of the area.

Note on Sources

The Annual Reports of the North West Mounted Police are the main source for the history of the police in the park area. With the exception of the reports for 1874, 1875, and 1879, they can be found in the Sessional Papers for the appropriate year as separate papers (after 1883). The reports for 1874 and 1879 were published separately, and have been reproduced in the Coles Canadiana Collection reprint series volume Opening the West, 1874-1881 (Toronto: Coles Publ. Co., 1973). The next three volumes in this series bring together the Reports for 1882-89. The report for 1875 was not published, but has recently been reproduced, with useful related materials, in the Historical Society of Alberta's A Chronical of the Canadian West: North-West Mounted Police Report for 1875 (Calgary: H.S.A., 1975).

Anyone doing further research on the subject will want to consult the Walsh Papers at the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, for the period 1876-80, and the RCMP records (RG 18) held by the Public Archives of Canada, especially for patrol records after 1890. For a guide to holdings see Public Archives of Canada, Public Records Division, Records of the RCMP (RG 18), J. Poulin, comp. (Ottawa: 1975). The PAC also has a complete collection of NWMP Stations and Patrols maps (see Appendix D).

The historiography of the NWMP is a subject in itself. In the authors' opinion, very few of the secondary works are worth looking at; with the exception of memoirs, the studies of R.C. Macleod (for his analytical insights), and J.P. Turner (for his masses of raw data). Useful critical guides to the literature are H.C. Klassen, "The Mounties and the Historians," in H.A. Dempsey, ed., Men In Scarlet (Calgary: 1974), pp. 173-186 and that in R.C. Macleod's section on law enforcement in L.G. Thomas, ed., The Prairie West to 1905 (Toronto: 1975), pp. 132-216. This also reproduces relevant documents.

CHAPTER IV TIME OF TROUBLES: THE SIOUX AT WOOD MOUNTAIN, 1876-1881

Introduction

In *Whoop-Up Country*, his classic history of the northwestern plains before 1885, Paul S. Sharp notes:

> 'Custer's Massacre', grossly exaggerated and badly named, was only a minor episode in western history. Events which followed it were of greater importance, both to whites and reds. And among these was the flight of the Sioux north into Canada.[1]

The passage of the first refugee Sioux across the "Medicine Line" into the Wood Mountain country late in 1876 marked the beginning of five years of continuous unrest, both along the border and in the diplomatic offices of Ottawa, London and Washington. More importantly, in terms of this study, it marked the beginning of a crucial transitional phase in the history of the park area. Much was written about the Sioux "invasion" of Canada at the time of its occurrence, much more has been written since, and a significant part remains to be written. The literature on the subject ranges from the brief asides found in almost every history of the northern plains, to volumes devoted entirely to the subject, and from polemic, on the one hand, to neutral scholarly analysis on the other.[2] Lacking, however, is a consideration of the significance of the episode in the context of local development. The Sioux invasion of the Wood Mountain country in 1876 was not a fortuitous incident. Its antecedents are deeply woven into the events and the patterns of development of the preceding century.

The Sioux and the Americans

Sitting Bull (Tatanka Yotanki) was a member of the Hunkpapa council, a branch of the Teton Sioux or Dakota ('allies') as they called themselves. By the mid-19th century the Dakota's hunting grounds centred on the Black Hills, which had been taken from the Crow in about 1822.[3] But they were notorious for their wanderings. "With license drawn from strength," MacEwan notes, "members of the tribe did not hesitate to penetrate deep into hunting territory claimed by neighbouring tribes."[4] Their hunting and raiding frequently took them up to the fringes of the parkland in the eastern half of the Canadian plains. As has been seen (Ch. 1), they were familiar with the Wood Mountain country at a very early date.

Sitting Bull is alleged by some to have been born in the vicinity of Wood Mountain about 1831. As a youth he made a name for himself both as a warrior and as a "medicine man," an occupation combining medical, political and religious responsibilities.[5] In 1867 he was elected a war chief of the Tetons and, by the 1870's,

> His influence extended beyond his own tribe ... to the Blackfoot [Sioux] and other Sioux groups.... Moreover, when these tribes came together with their Oglala, Brulé, Miniconjou and Sans Arc kinsmen to the south ... Sitting Bull's council commanded still wider attention and respect. Even the Northern Cheyenne and Northern Arapahoes, who often travelled with the Sioux, responded to his leadership.[6]

Sitting Bull was by no means the only influential Sioux leader, but the potent combination of his military and religious abilities, a commanding personality, a wide cross-tribal following, and his abiding opposition to the white civilization bent on destroying his culture,[7] made the chief a man to be reckoned with.

Due to the numbers, organization and excellent leadership of the Teton Sioux and their allies, they were able to keep American intrusion into their lands at a minimum until the 1870s. In the conflict over the Powder River country in 1866-68, the Sioux under Red Cloud and Sitting Bull fought the American Army to a standstill and forced them to pull out. The terms of the Treaty of 1868, which closed the Bozeman Trail and ceded the Black Hills area to the Dakotas in perpetuity, were largely dictated by the Sioux. The treaty, however, was based on a misunderstanding: the Americans thought that the land involved was worthless.[8]

The fundamental objective of the American government, especially after U.S. Grant became President in 1869, was to lure the Sioux onto reservations out of the way of white settlers, and "subject them to the apparatus of Indian administration." This would keep them under control and, hopefully, turn them into peaceful and self-supporting wards of the government.[9] One of the chief obstacles to the realization of these goals was that the concept of a "reservation" held by the government, and that entertained by the Indians, were not the same. The former saw it as a fixed and exclusive holding area for the Sioux; the latter as a home-base for their customary nomadic wanderings. As Robert Utley puts it, "the Indians no more than the whites respected treaty boundaries ... if contrary to their interests or inclinations."[10] The Sioux were sorely provoked in this direction, however, by the continued white intrusion into their lands after 1868.

The underlying cause of the bloody Indian wars which characterized American westward expansion was the inability of the American government to control the activities of its white citizens. It could make as many treaties with the Indians as it wished, but without effective, preventive law enforcement these treaties were meaningless pieces of paper. While dealing with the Indians was a federal responsibility, the application of the law rested with local civil courts, which, in the West, were notoriously unwilling to convict whites for offences against Indians. The American military did not have the legal powers necessary to deal with whites who violated treaty lands or cheated or killed Indians. Indeed, its officers faced civil prosecution if they overstepped their purely military role. The natural reaction of the Indians to such offences was to take the law into their own hands.

Public opinion then left the army with no choice but to react in kind. As a result, the army "partly out of frustration, progressively became the tool of punishment toward the Indian," although neither they nor the Indians were often guilty of provoking such trouble.[11]

The events leading up to the summer campaign of 1876 comprise a classic example of this vicious circle in operation. The trouble began in the early 1870s as the Northern Pacific Railway railhead approached and encroached upon Sioux territory. Heavy military escorts were needed for survey parties, and several skirmishes were fought in 1873. The Sioux also responded with an increase in general raiding.[12] The panic of 1873 stopped railway construction, but not military activity. Rumors of gold in the Black Hills brought miners into the area, with inevitable results. The army decided that a fort was needed there and, in 1874, sent a large expedition under Custer to find a suitable location. Unfortunately, Custer's report confirmed the existence of gold, which sent a flood of miners into the hills. By the fall of 1875 some 15,000 were at work. The American government first attempted to buy the Black Hills from the Indians. Failing in this, it then decided to reduce the Sioux' power to make war on the miners and settlers by confining the Indians on reservations along the Missouri. This meant dealing with Sitting Bull, the leader of Indian resistance to the plan, and his followers, who were then located on the unceded Sioux hunting grounds along the upper Missouri.[13] In short, it meant war.

In 1876, after a disappointing spring expedition, the army planned a full-scale summer campaign in present-day Montana. Under the overall command of Gen. Crook, this involved three independent columns which were to converge on and rendezvous at the centre of the Sioux hunting grounds, defeating the scattered Indians in detail along the way. Unfortunately for the army, the Sioux and their allies declined to play the part set out for them. Instead of scattering, they concentrated in the valley of the Rosebud and in unusually large numbers. Estimates range from 1500 to 6000 warriors[14] but can, in any case, be described as sufficient for the task at hand. The Sioux also made use of their central position in a decidedly Napoleonic fashion. On June 16 they stopped Crook's column in its tracks, inflicting heavy casualties. The Sioux then fell back to the valley of the Little Big Horn where, on June 25, they wiped out half of Col. George Armstrong Custer's Seventh U.S. Cavalry Regiment, including said colonel. Almost all of the American commanders, from Crook on down, have at one time or other been blamed for this humiliating defeat. As Utley notes, however, "In large part the generals lost the war [sic] because the Indians won it."[15] Certainly the "massacre" of Custer's troops (which it was in fact, but not in the implication of the term) earned Sitting Bull the lasting enmity of the United States Army and public.

Its victories on the Rosebud and the Little Big Horn only delayed the inevitable for the Sioux nation. The Sioux were in a position where they could win every battle and still lose the war. The latent power of their enemy was simply too great for them to overcome. By August the army had returned to the field in strength under Gen. Nelson Miles, and throughout the fall of 1876 and the subsequent winter harassed and pursued the Indians. Unlike the army, the Sioux warriors had their families to protect, and could seldom risk a full-scale battle. The Sioux were left with two choices. The first was to give up their arms and horses and return to the agencies, which many did in the spring of

1877.[16] The second was to seek sanctuary in foreign territory. Mexico being too far away, only Canadian territory remained. This was the option taken by Sitting Bull and some 4000 of his people.

The American Sioux in Canada

The decision to retreat into Canada was a natural one for the Sioux to make. Their 'cousins' the Santee had set the precedent in 1862 (Ch. 1), and Sitting Bull himself was familiar with the Canadian West, having been there on several occasions in the 1860s.[17] The Wood Mountain country was a natural destination. It was the closest location on his line of retreat, and there were no enemies in residence (such as the Blackfoot) powerful enough to contest the occupation. In fact, the Santee seem to have been the main Indian group in residence in the area at the time. The Métis were apparently not considered a serious problem. It is open to question, however, whether Sitting Bull fully appreciated the changes which had recently taken place north of the line.

The Sioux were of course familiar with the effect of the 49th Parallel, in that they knew the United States Army would not cross over it pursuing them. The "Medicine Line" meant sanctuary. What they may not have expected was that, by 1876-77, it had new implications. When he crossed the line in March of 1877, Sitting Bull's first contact with Canadian authority was with Supt. James Morrow Walsh of the North West Mounted Police, who calmly trotted into his camp one morning with a handful of men. In council, Walsh carefully explained the rules to "Bull" and the other chiefs, laying particular emphasis on the fact that the Sioux could not conduct warfare across the border without forfeiting Canadian protection. Sitting Bull reportedly showed "surprise and disappointment" that this check to his freedom of action existed, and launched into a lengthy speech about the wrongs done to him and his people by the Americans. Seeing that the superintendent was unmoved by this, however, the chief then beat a retreat and agreed to the conditions set.[18] Walsh was not entirely taken in by this acquiescence, for he reported to his superiors that he was "of the opinion that Sitting Bull is of a revengeful disposition, and ... if he could get the necessary support he would recross the line and make war on the Americans."[19] It would appear from this that Sitting Bull crossed the border solely to gain a respite from army attacks. While he was willing to keep the peace in Canada, his primary intention was to rebuild his strength for a return to the United States (perhaps with Canadian Indian allies). And the Wood Mountain country was to provide a secure base of operations where the Sioux noncombatants and supplies would be safe while the men were making war south of the line. Sitting Bull, however, had not reckoned with the North West Mounted Police when making these plans.

As has been noted earlier, the primary task of the new North West Mounted Police force "was to effectively occupy the West for Canada until the growth of population established Canadian ownership beyond any doubt."[20] As the events of 1885 were to show, police strength was insufficient to put down unrest by force once it gained any momentum.

Preventive law enforcement was the only solution possible, and the new force was accordingly given "powers unparalleled by any other police force in a democratic country"[21] to work with. The police not only dealt with day-to-day legal matters, but also had the power to try, and sentence, offenders. Moreover, they had the authority to carry out a wide range of other governmental duties[22] and, as a last resort, had the organization and training to apply military force if necessary; or, preferably, to make a show of force which would obviate the need for such action. This potent combination of powers and capabilities enabled the police, as Jennings put it, to effect a "rigid suppression of the self-expression of the white population" in the Canadian West.[23] Crimes against Indians were treated in exactly the same way as those against whites. This policy not only protected the Indians, but also encouraged them to accept the same rigid and impartial application of the law for themselves, particularly whe[illegible] was carried out in a straightforward fashion by a single agen[illegible] When Sitting Bull and his people came to Canada in 1876-77, they found the Wood Moutain country under effective Canadian control. In order for the Sioux to use the sanctuary, they had to forego the pleasure of using it as a base of operations against the United States.

The Sioux occupations of the Wood Mountain country can be divided into two periods: from the fall of 1876 to the summer of 1879, and from the fall of 1879 to the summer of 1881. The two are characterized, respectively, by Sioux strength and by Sioux starvation. In the first three years, enough game was available along the line to supply Sioux, Métis and Canadian Indians alike. During this period the former remained north of the border. Although some wandered as far afield as Batoche,[24] most of the American Sioux remained in the vicinity of Wood Mountain. In any case, nothing could be done to dislodge them from Canadian territory. At the request of the Canadian government, the Americans sent a commission to Canada in the fall of 1877, to discuss surrender terms with Sitting Bull. While the Americans offered an amnesty, however, they insisted that Sitting Bull's Sioux had to give up their arms and horses if they returned, as had those surrendering earlier. Even this policy, in fact, was more generous than the American public was willing to accept. In any case, the Sioux adamantly refused to return under these conditions, and treated the commission with scorn.[25]

The failure of the Sitting Bull Commission left three possible solutions to the deadlock. First, Canada could have granted the Sioux a permanent reservation. This was rejected as entailing too much risk and expense. Second, the Sioux could have been extradited by Canada. Aside from the problem of how this was to be accomplished by a handful of mounted policemen, the official British and Canadian position precluded it. When the United States requested this measure in 1878, they were turned down on the grounds that the Sioux were "refugees seeking a temporary asylum which had been awarded them" and as political offenders could not therefore be extradited.[26] The last alternative was for American troops to operate in Canada, expelling the Sioux. Permitting this was never seriously considered by the British or Canadians; and, although Gen. Miles once requested permission from the War Department to cross the border, his superiors were unwilling to accept the trouble with Britain which such unilateral action would probably have entailed.[27] These considerations dominated the diplomacy related to the Sitting Bull problem for its duration. While much has been made of the diplomatic background of the Sioux invasion, such negotiations as took place actually had little direct effect on the situation, except in the negative sense that they helped keep the integrity of the boundary line (and hence that of the Sioux' sanctuary) intact.

Had the buffalo remained plentiful, it is possible that the Sioux would have remained in the Wood Mountain country indefinitely, and, in the end, have been granted a reservation. In 1879, however, the herds did not come north of the boundary. The exact reason for this is uncertain. One American historian asserts that

> In 1878 the United States Government decided to starve Sitting Bull and his followers into surrender. A cordon of half-breeds, Indians, and American soldiers was therefore formed, and ordered to drive the buffalo back whenever the herds started to come north.[28]

While the direct responsibility of the United States Government for this action has never been confirmed,[29] it is certain that extensive prairie fires drove the herds away from Canada in the spring of 1879, and then destroyed the border-country range in the fall of the same year. Commissioner Dewdney of the Canadian Department of Indian Affairs noted that, in November of 1879,

> Prairie fires ... were started at different points almost simultaneously, *as if by some preconstructed arrangement*, and the country north of the boundary line was burnt from Wood Mountain on the east to the Rocky Mountains on the west, and nearly as far north as the latitude of Qu'Appelle.[30]

Local residents had no doubts that the United States government was responsible for this.[31] Whatever the cause, the result was a dramatic change in the Sioux situation.

The most dangerous phase of the Sioux occupation of the Wood Mountain country was the first half of 1879. The Indians were still numerous and healthy, but were understandably on edge due to the increasing difficulty of feeding themselves and their families. This persistent undercurrent of unrest threatened, on at least two occasions, to break out into open conflict at the slightest provocation. One arose from a growing tension between Walsh and Sitting Bull over the theft of horses by the latter's followers. Walsh threatened to hold the chief personally responsible and, in effect, insulted him during an argument on the matter. Soon after, Sitting Bull and several of his chiefs came to him to demand provisions and make complaints. When insults were again exchanged, Walsh completely lost his temper and literally kicked Sitting Bull out of his quarters. Only the efforts of the other chiefs kept Sitting Bull from fighting Walsh then and there. When Sitting Bull withdrew to gather his followers, Walsh prepared the post to receive an attack, his men even going so far as to write and bury their last letters home. While a mob did gather, however, they were faced down by the armed and ready police, and no further violence resulted.[32]

The second incident involved an American trader by the name of Allen, who managed the Kendall and Smith trading post near the police post at Wood Mountain. Allen was thought to have been cheating the Sioux and, one evening, an Indian mob attempted to break into his barricaded store. Failing in this, they returned the next morning and seized his wife and child, threatening to kill the latter unless the trader gave them supplies to feed their own children. Allen responded by placing the muzzle of his Winchester against a barrel of gunpowder and threatening to blow everyone up. The impasse was broken by "Peaches" Davis, an ex-police constable working at the store. Davis broke out the door and made for the police post, where Walsh (who himself was ill) immediately despatched a sergeant and three men to break up the confrontation. This was successfully accomplished, although the police had to forcibly remove the Indians from the premises. Shortly thereafter Allen, whom Walsh accused to his face of unsavory business practices, departed for safer climes under police escort.[33]

These two incidents were indicative of the growing tension in the Wood Mountain country. That no lives were lost demonstrated both the effectiveness of the police policy of taking immediate action to curtail dangerous situations and, more importantly, the Indian's fear of the United States Army. That the latter was justified was shown during 1879. The Americans were adamant that, as long as the Sioux remained in Canada, they would be considered hostile, and would not be allowed to hunt in the United States. When large parties of Sioux went south to do so in the early summer, they were attacked by the United States army. While the Sioux had been content to restrict themselves to Canadian soil, the army had been prepared to keep a low profile along the border. Desiring to avoid unnecessary incidents, the army command had ordered Gen. Miles to confine his activities to the Missouri River area, except for reconnaisance. In 1879, however, the number of "hostile" Sioux on American territory was too great to ignore, and Miles was given permission to move north in force. Some 700 officers and men, two rapid-fire cannon and large numbers of Indian auxiliaries (including Crows, Cheyenne and 'friendly' Sioux) were employed in the operation. By the end of July, after some sharp fighting, the Sioux had been driven back into Canada.[34]

The army's "victory," while doubtless gratifying to the American public, was a mixed success. While it ensured that the Sioux surrender in the long term, by cutting them off from their only major food supply, it also confirmed the Sioux in their resolve to stay out of American hands as long as possible. Sitting Bull, for example, stated to Walsh that, "So long as there remains a gopher to eat, I will not go back."[35] Moreover, it brought about a complete deadlock between Canada and the United States on the subject of the Sioux. The Americans wished them to surrender, but would not modify their terms, (that horses and guns be given up) since the Indians had seemingly shown themselves still to be hostile. The British and Canadians wished it even more, but could not force the Sioux to leave and in the interim, refused to accept any responsibility for the Indians' behavior - in particular, since they felt the American position with regard to hunting parties to be unreasonable and provocative. The British and Canadians alike consistently maintained that the Sioux were not intent on conducting hostilities on their trips into the United States, and this seems to have been the case. On the abortive hunt of 1879, for example, the Sioux had their women and children with them, which was hardly practical for a war party.[36]

The events of 1879 had other unfortunate consequences for the Sioux, in contributing to the downfall of James Walsh. When the Conservatives came to power in 1879 they were determined to get rid of the Indians, particularly because they might prove to be a threat to the peaceful construction of the proposed Canadian Pacific Railway. Walsh had the misfortune to be held personally responsible for extending the Sioux stay in Canada by the new Prime Minister. In November of 1879 John A. Macdonald stated that,

> Walsh undoubtedly has influence with "Bull" which [sic] he tried to monopolize in order to make himself of importance and is I fear primarily responsible for the Indians' unwillingness to leave Canada.[37]

The fact that Walsh was a Liberal may also have had something to do with it. In any case, Walsh and his men were transferred from Wood Mountain in the summer of 1880 (Ch. 3). Macdonald, however, interpreted Walsh's continued interest in the situation afterwards as undue interference. In 1881 the superintendent was ordered on "extended leave" (to be served in Ontario), and in 1883 was forced to resign from the North West Mounted Police.[38] Modern historians are more-or-less unanimous in their judgement that Walsh was not guilty as charged. While he certainly had his failings (including, from a contemporary point of view, his high regard for Sitting Bull and his people), he nonetheless had consistently urged the Sioux to return to the United States. In fact, sizable numbers of Indians began to surrender to American authorities even before he left Wood Mountain.[39] It may be, however, that a more ruthless personality was needed to oversee the last stage of the Sioux withdrawal.

The winter of 1879-80 was an extremely difficult one for the Sioux. They had not been able to put up their customary supplies of meat for the winter and, due to the destruction of the grazing range at Wood Mountain by fire, the main camp actually had to winter just over the line, in the United States, on the Frenchman.[40] By early spring the Indians were in dire straits. Walsh's report on the situation in the spring of 1880 is worth quoting at length:

> April 1st,... The meat at the [main] camp this day became exhausted and ... further supply could not be procured. Hunger and suffering prevailed for the next five or six weeks. Horses that died from scurvy, and carcases [sic] of horses that died during the autumn and early winter, were gathered up and eaten. In some cases persons became so reduced as to render them unable to assist themselves, and I was forced to make small issues of food to save their lives. Following this want of food and the eating of diseased horses, an epidemic appeared, which marked its results by the many graves now to be seen in Wood Mountain.[41]

Walsh greatly admired the Indians for their peaceful and orderly conduct in the face of these troubles, and his men at the post saved every extra scrap of food to give to the women and children. But neither admiration nor individual charity could save the Sioux, as long as the Canadian government refused to accept any responsibility for them. It is evident that Sitting Bull's hold on his people was considerably reduced by these sufferings, and the new police commander at the post took full advantage of the fact.

The Indian exodus which began in the spring of 1880 was accelerated by the new policy implemented by Supt. L.N.F. Crozier. Where Walsh had enjoyed a special relationship with Sitting Bull, and dealt with the

Sioux through him, Crozier followed the time-tested principle of "divide and rule." This new approach, of course, was only made possible by the deterioration of the Sioux position. In any case, the new commander was of the opinion that Sitting Bull "wished, whatever his reasons or objects might be, to delay the surrender of the hostiles." He therefore decided,

> to break his influence with the camp; ... instead of treating him with exceptional deference and addressing myself especially to him in council, I spoke to the people generally, telling them not to allow anyone or any set of men to prevent their accepting the American terms of surrender.[42]

This approach soon had the desired effect of breaking down the unity of the Sioux. In July, sixty-five lodges under Spotted Eagle departed and, thereafter, "Sitting Bull and his soldiers had to prevent lodges leaving several times by force." These attempts had little effect in the long run, and may even have convinced the majority of the Sioux that Crozier's arguments were sound for, in December, almost all of the main camp departed for the United States under Low Dog.[43] Sitting Bull himself considered surrendering at this time, and almost did so. Early in December he actually crossed the border into the United States but, on the way, he chanced to witness an army attack on a Sioux camp. Although this was done because its chief, Gall, was slow in moving to his assigned agency, Sitting Bull saw it as proof of continued American perfidy. Evading the troops sent to intercept him, he headed back to Wood Mountain.[44] By the time of his return in January, however, only forty lodges of Sioux (about 250 people) remained in Canada with him.[45] In effect, the main Sioux occupation ended in December of 1880.

The story of Sitting Bull's surrender is anticlimactic. With almost all of his followers gone, he no longer posed a major threat to the peace. This was clear as early as November, when an American official asserted that "Sitting Bull is not worth making a fuss about."[46] Nonetheless, his presence was a constant irritant, especially to the police at Wood Mountain, and all their efforts were bent towards persuading him to return. The harsh winter of 1880-81 greatly assisted in this for, by spring, the Sioux were reduced to eating duck eggs and roots.[47] In April J.L. Legare was able to persuade a handful (about 16) to surrender, and provided supplies for the trip to Fort Buford.[48] Sitting Bull, however, continued to grasp at straws. Hoping to find his friend Walsh and convince the Canadian government to grant him a reservation, he and a few of his followers trekked to Fort Qu'Appelle. The journey was in vain. On their arrival they found that Walsh had been sent to Ontario, and the local authorities refused to either supply food or discuss a reservation, although the Sioux were able to trade the last of their possessions for flour.[49] The failure of this journey marked the end of any lingering hopes Sitting Bull may have entertained. While he was away, Legare had persuaded 32 more of his people to head south and, on his return to Wood Mountain in July, Sitting Bull finally decided to follow. After lengthy negotiations with Legare, who supplied generous amounts of food and equipment for the trip, and an American representative, the chief and 235 of his followers set out for the United States. On 19 July 1881 they reached Fort Buford and turned in themselves, their arms and horses to its commander, Major D.H. Brotherton.[50] After five years in exile, Sitting Bull finally surrendered under exactly the same terms offered him by the commission of 1877.

Conclusions

While the Sioux invasion of the Wood Mountain country was the product of United States Indian policy and frontier conditions, and their extended occupation had international repercussions, it is evident that the eventual surrender of Sitting Bull and his people resulted from changes in local conditions and from the efforts of the men closest to the problem to persuade them to leave. International diplomacy played a very minor role. The key elements in the resolution of the problem were, first, the disappearance of the buffalo and, second, the efforts of Walsh, Crozier and Legare. The first destroyed Sioux independence and eventually led to internal dissention, and these weaknesses were fully exploited, in different ways, by the three men named. Walsh kept the peace while the Sioux were at the height of their power, and afterwards put this goodwill to use to convince the first of the Sioux to surrender. Crozier then played upon fragmented loyalties and, aided by famine and disease, broke the back of Sioux recalcitrance. Finally, Legare used an economic lever to pry Sitting Bull himself, and most of his remaining followers, away from Canada and back to the United States. Both countries had reason to be grateful to these men. Had the Sioux risen in 1876-81, or had they been present in the territories in 1885, untold damage might have been done on both sides of the boundary, especially in the north.

As might perhaps be expected, none of the three greatly benefited from their accomplishment. James Walsh had his North West Mounted Police career cut short; Crozier's career does not seem to have been affected either way. J.L. Legare, however, lost a considerable amount of money through his efforts on behalf of the two governments. The matter of his claims, and the reimbursements made, is somewhat confused. When Legare went to Buford in April of 1881 with the first load of Sioux, the commander of the fort (Major Brotherton) told him that the United States government would gladly pay any expenses connected with the return of Sitting Bull and, when the last of the Sioux were delivered in July, the sum of $16,000 seems to have been mentioned.[51] On a trip to Buford in April of 1882, Legare accordingly submitted an itemized list of claims totalling $13,412. A problem arose, however, when he went to Washington in October to collect. As Legare noted, "My dues were recognized but no one knew which department was to pay me."[52] Leaving this matter in abeyance, Legare continued on to Quebec, where he met with Governor-General Lorne and Donald Smith. On their recommendation, Legare was granted $2,000 and a township of land by Parliament.[53] He took the money, but declined the land, stating, "Of what value is land to me? The prairie all around is free to anyone who desires to use it. It has little value."[54]

In the meantime, the main claim for $13,412 was submitted to and passed by the United States Congress.[55] In 1887 it went to a court of claims for final adjudication. The court, however, was not convinced that Legare deserved full compensation, for it felt that he had acted in his own interests in removing the Sioux from Canada. More importantly, it ruled that no formal agreement had existed between Legare and the United States government, since Major Brotherton had exceeded his authority and, in any case, had not confirmed the alleged agreement in writing. Finally, the judge dismissed the petition for full reimbursement but recommended that "the Government ... pay him a reasonable compensation for his services, provisions, and clothing furnished the Indians."[56] A "reasonable" sum turned out to be $5,000, which was later paid.[57] In the end, Legare received about half of what he claimed, and the claim itself did not include his expenses in connection with the Sioux contracted before 1881, or any of the indirect expenses such as the $19,000 lost when the United States Army convinced half of the Wood Mountain Métis to leave (without paying their debts), in 1879 (Ch. 2). Legare would have been well advised to have kept the notoriously short attention span of governments in mind, and demanded cash on delivery.

These individual problems, important as they doubtless were to those involved, dwindle in significance in comparison with the fundamental changes which took place in the park area during, and partially as a result of the Sioux occupation. In 1876 the Wood Mountain country was still a buffalo range occupied on a seasonal basis by a handful of Indian and Métis hunters and traders. By the early 1880s the old way of life had disappeared, leaving an even smaller handful of Indian and Métis hunters and scavengers whose future was (to say the least) none too bright. The period 1876-81 was a time of transformation and redirection.

The demarkation of the International Boundary in 1874, and the simultaneous arrival of the police, were harbingers of change. While the line itself was merely a string of crumbling stone cairns across the prairie, and the police were thinly spread along it, a frontier had nonetheless been established where none had existed before in the Wood Mountain country. When the Sioux refugees arrived in 1876-77, they were continuing a tradition of tribal movement into this centrally located area, long a neutral zone for the Indians of the northwestern plains due to its lack of natural boundaries and its marginal resources. In the event, the Sioux proved to be the last representatives of this tradition, for conditions were changing. In moving north to escape the pressures of American expansion, they came upon the thinly manned frontier of Canadian westward movement. From the first the "American" Sioux were unwanted intruders in the "Canadian" West, and had to accept the political conditions set in order to gain sanctuary. In doing so, however, they also cut themselves off from part of the buffalo range necessary to support their way of life. It was only a matter of time before the natural and manipulated seasonal movements of the herds left them high and dry and, therefore, before their position became untenable.

The same changes affected the "Canadian" Indians and Métis, who had previously made use of the area, in equal measure. With the disappearance of the buffalo the former became totally dependent on the Canadian government for food. In order to keep the border country quiet after the departure of the Sioux, and to simplify administration and control, the government moved the Cree and Assiniboine north, off the plains and onto reserves in the parkland belt. This operation took place in 1882-83.[58] Since the government did not have the same responsibilities towards the Métis, or power over them, this group remained in the park area after 1881. They did so, however, in greatly reduced numbers. The disappearance of the buffalo and the interdiction of the American range broke up the pre-1876 community. The park area simply could not support the same number of familes which had wintered there earlier on a permanent basis. After 1879 the community fragmented, and most of its members dispersed in small groups to suitable locations elsewhere in Canada and in the United States. The few who remained in the Wood Moutain country trekked east in 1880-82, to set up a permanent village at Willow Bunch. Led by French Canadian settlers, they began the long and painful process of adjusting to the new order (Ch. 2).

The dominant factor in the Wood Mountain scene after 1881 was the presence of the Canadian Pacific Railway line to the north. The construction of this line marked the beginning of a new cycle in the history of the park area: one based on a money economy, tied to eastern Canada, and centering on white ranchers and farmers. Accordingly, the police role in the area underwent a rapid transformation (Ch. 3), and the orientation of trade and commerce shifted from south to north. In the early 1880s the last of the American traders left the Wood Mountain country. Legare, left with a virtual monopoly on the area, shifted his line of supply and trade to the railway (Ch. 2). The park area, vacated by all but a few Indians and Métis, was opened up for settlement. At first, this consisted exclusively of ranchers, but as other, more desirable areas were occupied, the time of intensive agricultural settlement rapidly approached. These developments, for good or ill, were made possible by the changes which had taken place during Sitting Bull's famous occupation of the Wood Mountain country.

Aftermath: The Wood Mountain Sioux

The history of the Sioux at Wood Mountain after 1881 comprises a minor but interesting postscript to the Sitting Bull episode. When the chief surrendered in that year a handful of Hunkpapa under Black Bull (Wambligi) remained in Canada.[59] Why they did so is not entirely clear but, with Sitting Bull gone, the Canadian authorities made no effort to get rid of them. The Sioux quickly fell into a pattern of wintering at a permanent camp near Moose Jaw where work could be had, and hunting during the summer at Wood Mountain.[60] They hoped to be granted a reserve, such as the Santee had received earlier[61] but this did not materialize. In 1885 some joined the rebels[62] but five were taken on as North West Mounted Police scouts. Supt. Deane reported that,

> These Sioux were adapted for the work, in that they were not in sympathy with the rebels, were very anxious to remain on this side of the line, and were in hopes of inducing the Canadian Government to grant them a reserve.[63]

Despite the good service rendered, this was not forthcoming.

After 1885 the Sioux continued their annual round, and regularly appeared in the police reports from Wood Mountain. In every instance, the commanders commented on their good behavior.[64] As one officer put it, the Sioux were "a harmless lot."[65] Nonetheless, the police were not happy with the situation. Having thirty-odd families of uncategorized Indians on their hands seems to have made them nervous and, also, the Sioux were notorious for the amount of game which they killed. In 1892 Asst. Commissioner Perry noted two antelope kills of 72 and 99 animals. He recommended that, for the good of their children, who were "growing up without any education, or any training which might help them earn a living," the Sioux be induced to return to the United States.[66] In 1894, some 50 were actually persuaded to do so but two families soon returned, stating that they "preferred to live in Canada."[67] It appears that most of the Sioux were quite happy with the status quo.

As long as the Wood Mountain country remained unsettled, and they caused no trouble, there was no real motivation to interfere with the Indians. After the turn of the century, however, it was necessary to do something. With agricultural settlement beginning, their freedom to wander and hunt was greatly restricted. The obvious solution was a reserve but, as always, the fact that the Sioux were not Canadian treaty Indians (and therefore could not claim land) stood in the way. In the end, the government turned to the precedent set for the Santee who, in 1873, had been granted reserves "as a matter of grace and not as a matter of right."[68] About 1912 or 1913 a temporary reserve was set up at Wood Mountain, largely through the efforts of a local Presbyterian minister.[69] This consisted of 6,820 acres in the northeast corner of Tp. 4-4 W3, just east of the police post. In 1916 the police reported that,

> Mr. Thompson, the Custom's officer at Wood Mountain, also acts in the capacity of overseer of these Indians. There are about sixty of them, who appear to be healthy, and they are exceptionally well-conducted.[70]

While this reserve (#160) was not officially confirmed until 1930,[71] after 1912 it was the permanent home of the only Hunkpapa band in Canada. Also, several non-reserve Sioux families later moved into the vicinity, and the small community took up ranching and farming.[72] Although it had taken more than 30 years, Sitting Bull's hopes finally materialized for at least a few of his people.

Note on Sources

This episode is unique in the historiography of the park area in the quality and quantity of the literature available. Two good popular histories have been written: Grant MacEwan's Sitting Bull: The Years in Canada and C.F. Turner's Across the Medicine Line. Both are accurate and readable, although the first makes better use of primary sources. The diplomatic aspects of the affair are very well covered in P.S. Sharp, Whoop-Up Country, Chs. 12 and 13, and in two articles by G. Pennanen, "Sitting Bull, Indian Without a Country," and C.C. Joyner, "The Hegira of Sitting Bull to Canada: Diplomatic Realpolitik, 1876-1881"; the first two named being particularly useful. Histories of the NWMP contain a good deal of relevant information, particularly J.P. Turner, The North-West Mounted Police 1873-1893 (despite his failure to identify his sources). R.C. Macleod, The North-West Mounted Police and Law Enforcement, 1873-1905, p. 30 ff. has a good treatment of the internal police politics involved, and John Jennings's "The Plains Indian and the Law" is an excellent comparative discussion of U.S. and Canadian attitudes towards law and law enforcement in their respective Wests. The Annual Reports of the NWMP for 1876-1881 are, of course, indispensable. In addition, R.M. Utley, Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indians, 1866-1890, Chs. 14 and 15, provides a lucid account of American military operations and Indian policy in the period, and Rev. Gontran Laviolette's Sioux Indians in Canada is a sympathetic treatment of this subject covering the whole of the 19th century. The critical question of the numbers of buffalo in the Park area in 1876-81 is examined by F.G. Roe, The North American Buffalo, pp. 475-79. A number of local histories also provide useful information - notably the Hamiltons' These are the Prairies. This is based largely on first hand accounts by the Métis, and centres on J.L. Legare. Rondeau and Chabot's History of Willow Bunch, Sask., 1870-1970 is also worth consulting here. If further work is undertaken, priority should be given to a thorough search of contemporary Canadian and U.S. newspapers, many of which sent correspondents to Wood Mountain. The Walsh Papers at the Provincial Archives, and Department of Interior records at the Public Archives of Canada, should also be examined.

CHAPTER V THE WAY WEST: EXPLORATION AND SURVEY, 1853-83

Introduction

The scientific explorers and land surveyors who, literally, put the park area "on the map" played a vital role in the history of its development. It is true, as J.G. Nelson points out, that "the evidence suggests that few white men ever discovered anything for themselves,"[1] but relied heavily on the guidance and expertise of Indians and Métis. It is also true that most of the white explorers and surveyors were little more than tourists, in that their passage did not have an immediate impact on the areas which they examined. This was particularly the case in the park area, which was not even visited until a relatively late date. Nonetheless, their activities deserve more than cursory attention. The reason for this lies in the purpose behind their expeditions, and the long-term impact of their work. The scientific explorers and the surveyors were concerned with the potential of the area for eventual white settlement, and with preparing it for such use. They were the vanguard of a new social and economic system. It would not be too much to say every explorer's report was a Requiem, and every Boundary Commission or Dominion Land Survey marker a tombstone, for the old way of life.

There were two distinct phases in the exploration and survey of the park area. In the first, which lasted from mid-century to 1874, there was no actual penetration (with one partial exception), but information gleaned by expeditions to and around the periphery of the northwestern plains provided the basis for a preliminary appraisal of its character. The Palliser and Hind expeditions were of particular importance in this work. In the second phase, lasting from 1874 to the mid-1880s, the first-hand accounts of scientists, North West Mounted Police officers and surveyors provided a wealth of concrete information. A radically new appraisal of the nature and potential of the area was derived from this. It is debatable, however, whether it was a more accurate one.

Secondhand Assessments 1853-74

Until the 1870s that part of the northwestern plains bounded on the south by the Missouri, on the north and west by the South Saskatchewan River, and on the east by the northern section of the Missouri Coteau was a blank spot on contemporary maps of the West. Indeed, until the 1850s virtually the only things known about it were that it was a dry, unwooded prairie, and some or all of it was buffalo country. This picture was largely based on hearsay evidence or educated guesses, since the fur traders and explorers making these reports stayed close to the main rivers to the north and south.[2]

The major question to be answered was whether the area was merely dry, or whether it was uninhabitable desert. The latter possibility arose from American assessments of the lands south of the Missouri. Zebulon Pike, in 1806-7, had described the Arkansas River country as "sandy, sterile desert," and Steven H. Long, in 1819-20, had labelled the Platte River basin the "Great Desert." By the 1840s it was commonly accepted that this description applied to much of the region west of the Mississippi[3] but how far north the "Great American Desert" extended was unknown. There were indications that it did not reach as far as the western territories of British North America. David Thompson, writing in the 1840s, described the lands between the South Saskatchewan and the Missouri as a good grazing area.[4] He apparently based this conclusion on the fact that it was such a popular hunting ground for the Indians. If this was the case then, obviously, it was not 'desert' in the common usage of the term.[5]

Thompson's general appraisal was upheld by one of the members of the American railway reconnaisance expedition of 1853-54. This party, under Isaac Stevens, went as far north as the Cypress Hills. John Lambert, its topographer, described "the great tract of country" between the Milk River and the South Saskatchewan as "embracing every variety of surface, from large and level plains to abrupt bluffs and ranges of summit hills that might be considered mountains." In company with this accurate description, he strove to impress his readers with the "dreary solitude" of the area; but also noted that,

> though the wild aspect and dull colors of the landscape in many and extensive sections might produce a supposition of barrenness, the idea must be greatly qualified, if not removed, by the fact that all these regions are the pasture-grounds of frequent herds of various kinds of deer ..., with quantities of inferior game and species of vermin, and, last and greatest, the unfailing millions of the uncouth and ponderous buffalo.[6]

The implications of this statement are fairly clear and, until the 1870s, Lambert's description of the southern interior remained the only one available which was based on firsthand experience. Nonetheless, it had little influence on those subsequently involved in the full-scale exploration of the British territories.

The two major expeditions to the Northwest Territories in the 1850s were led by Capt. John Palliser (1857-59) and Dr. H.Y. Hind (1857-58) - sent, respectively, by the British and Canadian governments. Their purposes were the same: to gather information about the resources of the western interior and, specifically, about its agricultural potential. The reasons for sending them at this time were also essentially similar, arising from a growing conviction in Canada West that the land and resources of the West were the solution to its domestic problems. This led Canadians to challenge the Hudson's Bay Company's claims to the region, which in turn, led the British government to set up a Committee of Inquiry into the company's administration, which in turn led to a similar Canadian committee. In both cases it was found that concrete information (as opposed to partisan speculation) was in short supply: hence the two expeditions.[7]

Neither Palliser nor Hind, nor any of their parties, actually entered the central area between the South Saskatchewan and the Missouri during their travels. Instead, they confined themselves to its periphery. Both expeditions skirted the Coteau on their way from Qu'Appelle to the South Saskatchewan, and some of Palliser's people journeyed due south from the river to the Cypress Hills.[8] Despite this, the reports of both expeditions had a good deal to say about the unvisited area: little of it good.

Palliser's conclusions are, of course, the most familiar. In his General Report, published in 1862, he summed up the findings of the expedition. Basically, he divided the British territories into two parts: an area of good land in the north and east, and one of arid plains to the south and west. The park area lay in the centre of the latter. Palliser stated that the American "central desert" extended "but a short way into British Territory, forming a triangle, having for its base the 49th parallel from longitude 100° to 114° W., with its apex reaching the 52nd parallel of latitude."[9] He had first outlined this famous triangle in his journal on 24 July 1858, noting that it enclosed "the true prairie district" in which there was "no timber, the soil is sandy, with little or no admixture of earthy material, and the pasture is inferior."[10] He recognized that some parts of the triangle were better than others, but the park area was included in the worst of it. In 1860 Palliser reported that one of the districts which "for the purposes of the agriculturalist... will for ever be comparatively useless" was "that lying along the southern branch of the Saskatchewan [River], and southward from thence to the boundary line."[11]

Palliser was not alone in his conclusions regarding this area. While there was some disagreement among his colleagues on other matters, there was none with regard to the location and character of the heart of the triangle. Lt. Thomas Blakiston, who left the expedition after arguments with the captain, concurred on both counts. In his own report, he noted the poor soil development of the area south of the South Saskatchewan; "which tract" he observed "stretching southward beyond the Missouri has in parts not inaptly been termed 'desert'."[12] Dr. James Hector was marginally more optimistic, noting that,

> It is ... highly satisfactory for us, as British subjects, to know that the arid region extends but a short way to the north of the 49th parallel ... and that even the small area of desert within our territories derives its character more from the nature of the soil than from the general climatic conditions.

But, at the same time, he admitted that "the arid district, although there are many fertile spots throughout its extent, can never be of much advantage to us as a possession." Hector's final judgement was that, "on the whole, it must be described as deficient in wood, water and grass."[13]

The British expedition labelled the park area a desert, sight unseen, but partially qualified this conclusion by allowing for local variations which were likely to be found there. H.Y. Hind, the head of the Canadian expedition to the South Saskatchewan in 1858, was less inclined to make exceptions. In his popular narrative report, he stressed a somewhat arbitrary two-part division of the British western interior. This consisted of an arid area of roughly the same dimensions as Palliser's triangle around which, to the north and east, arched a "fertile Belt" which was deemed uniformly fit for settlement. Like Hector, he recognized internal differences within the arid area but, in his case, these subdivisions were seen in terms of uniform belts rather than widespread localized variations. Hind divided the arid area into "prairies" and "plains," and proposed that,

> The plateau of the Grand Coteau forms the true Plains of Rupert's Land, where both soil and climate unite in establishing a sterile region ... From the character of its soil and the aridity of its climate, the Grand Coteau is permanently sterile and unfit for the abode of civilized man.[14]

This statement left very little room for doubt as to his opinion of the character of the park area.

Because of its prolific animal life, earlier explorers (and, in a pragmatic way, the hunters and traders who frequented the area) had tended to discount the idea that the southern interior of the British territories was a "desert." Game was the staff of life, and as long as it was available technicalities of definition were not of any great importance. Palliser and Hind did not ignore this facet of the region. Palliser, for example, has left a classic description of a buffalo herd on the plains north of the park area. In a journal entry of September 21, 1857 he noted,

> We are now in the heart of the buffalo country ... The whole region as far as the eye could reach was covered with buffalo, in bands varying from hundreds to thousands. So vast were the herds ... the grass was eaten to the earth, as if the plain had been devastated by locusts.[15]

Palliser and Hind, however, were interested in agricultural capability, not grazing capacity. When they wrote their reports the bison seemed likely to be a permanent fixture on the plains. Good grazing land was therefore equated with buffalo-infested country. Since the uncontrollable herds were rightly seen as a major obstacle to agriculture, the best range was therefore not perceived to be suitable for settlement.

In all probability, though, their evaluation would have remained the same even if the explorers had known that the bison's days were numbered. These men tended to judge the agricultural capability of an area by the native vegetation which they observed. Short-grasses, sagebrush and cacti were taken to be an indicator of either poor soils or an arid climate, if not both,[16] and arid grasslands would remain arid grasslands - buffalo or no buffalo. Since proper dryland farming techniques were unknown at the time, it would have been highly irresponsible of them to have suggested that agricultural settlement was feasible in the driest part of the plains.[17] Even when such techniques had been developed, half a century later, events were to show that their doubts were justified. One of the chief characteristics of a semi-arid climate is its wide fluctuations in precipitation. In such periods of severe drought as the Thirties, many parts of the "inner triangle" pessimistically outlined by Hind were proven to be unsuitable for agricultural purposes. As Irene Spry has observed, in Palliser's case, "A great deal of trouble, expense and heart-break would have been saved if the Expedition's conclusions about the Triangle had been taken more seriously."[18]

The Palliser and Hind expeditions were the first concrete expression of Canadian interest in the West as a field for expansion. They provided an enormous amount of new information about the interior. As it was meant to do, this knowledge paved the way for the Canadian takeover a decade later. It may be, however, that Palliser and Hind did their work too well. At one blow the West was apparently stripped of its mystery. After 1860 the region was no longer seen as a "great unknown" but as one whose general form and characteristics had been established. The men who followed in their footsteps therefore considered it their task to fill in the specific details and, most importantly, to devise ways and means by which the Dominion could administer the area, build transportation lines to it, and settle it with white farmers.[19] In short, Canadian western expansion was reduced from a vague possibility, of unknown dimensions, to a set of technical problems. Later explorers and surveyors accordingly adopted a technical approach to the region - one which assumed that, given accurate data, and proper techniques and materials, any given problem could be solved sooner or later. And the sooner solutions were forthcoming, the better. This highly optimistic attitude was the hallmark of the exploration and development of the park area after 1870.

Firsthand Appraisals 1873-83

Once the West officially became Canadian property in 1870, it was necessary to establish its exact southern boundary, and to undertake a detailed survey of its resources. In the park area, this led to the hurried visit of Robert Bell in 1873, to the more substantial work of the International Boundary Commission of 1873-74, and the associated survey of G.M. Dawson.

The honour of being the first scientific explorer to examine the park area belongs to Robert Bell, a geologist in the employ of the Geological Survey of Canada. Happily for future historians in search of symbolism, his visit was brief. Travelling on horseback from the Dirt Hills, Bell went in and came out as quickly as was possible. As he put it, "This mode of travelling was considered advisable for the sake of expedition and to avoid being plundered by hostile Indians who were reported to be then in that neighbourhood."[20] Unfortunately for all but a small part of posterity, his comments on the trip were confined almost exclusively to geological points of interest - particularly those in the 'gap' between Wood Mountin and Pinto Butte. He was, however, the first to record the presence of fossils and coal beds in the district; even though "in attempting to carry back some specimens of the former on horseback, they were unfortunately reduced to powder." Also of interest was his comment that "there is an impression among the half-breed traders that these hills [the Wood Mountain plateau] are situated very near "the International Boundary, which emphasizes some of the contemporary uncertainty in the district. While Bell's side-trip did little to clarify anything about anything, the location problem was corrected soon after.

The International Boundary Commission was formed by the British and American governments in 1872, to survey and mark the exact line of the 49th Parallel of latitude from the Lake of the Woods to the summit of the Rocky Mountains.[21] This task was particularly desirable from the British-Canadian point of view. It would provide a continuous baseline for further subdivision of prairie land and, more importantly, it would establish the exact property line between Canada and the United States in the West - a necessity if the Canadian claim to the area was to be recognized and realized. As long as the location of the boundary remained a matter for personal interpretation, the new owners could not hope to control the activities of the nomadic hunters and indigent traders who then made up the better part of its population. And the consensus of contemporary opinion was that, unless law and order were quickly established in the Canadian West, there was a strong possibility that it would not long remain Canadian.

Most of the leaders, and many of the field crews of the boundary survey were military engineers.[22] The work was carried out with remarkable speed and efficiency. By the end of the first field season, the summer of 1873, the surveyors had worked their way as far west as the Wood Mountain plateau. Late in September Capt. Gregory, of the United States Army, and Capt. Anderson, the chief astronomer of the British contingent, reached the West Poplar River (5-3-1 W3) 408 miles west of the Red River.[23] This marked the terminal point of the summer's operations, and Gregory returned to the Missouri. Capt. Anderson, however, continued west in search of a site for a supply depot from which to base the British party's work in 1874. His first choice was a point on McEachern Creek near the border (1-8 W3) but, while heading back east, he met a party of Indians who told him about the Métis settlement at Wood Mountain. An established settlement was obviously a preferable site, since supplies and teamsters would be onhand, and after going there himself, Anderson selected Wood Mountain as the 1874 depot.[24]

In the next summer the settlement at Wood Mountain served as the headquarters for the British boundary survey, which worked west as far as the Rockies. An advance party under Lt. Crompton arrived in May and constructed a log depot building, before moving on to reconnoitre the Frenchman River valley. At the first fork on the river north of the border "where vehicles could pass on the hunters' track from Wood Mountain to Fort Benton" (Seventy Mile Crossing), a sub-depot was established.[25] Then on June 22, Capt. Anderson and the main party arrived at Wood Mountain, after a 32-day trip on the "Traders' Road" from Dufferin by ox-train. They found that 60 tons of oats, previously ordered from Fort Benton, had already arrived and, after sending a wagon train to stock the sub-depot on the Frenchman, they immediately set to work surveying.[26]

The different attitudes, (and problems) of the Americans and British working in the West in this period are well illustrated by the activities of the former's boundary survey unit in the summer of 1874. While Capt. Anderson's British party consisted only of surveyors and their assistants, and relied on fixed supply points, the American one was accompanied by a heavy military escort and depended on a heavily guarded supply train. Their main column, which left Fort Buford on June 15, was accompanied by two companies of the 7th Cavalry Regiment and five of the 6th Infantry, the escort being commanded by Major Reno of the 7th. Of these, an entire company of infantry - totalling about 45 officers and men - was detailed to escort Capt. J.F. Gregory, his surveyors and his supply train to Little Rock Creek to rendezvous with Capt. Featherstonhaugh of the British contingent on June 21; and to protect the American party during the summer.[27] This large and heavily laden column naturally had a great deal of trouble negotiating the Frenchman River-Rock Creek badland country. The American chief astronomer, Capt. W.J. Twining, described this area as "an endless and tiresome succession of arid and treeless hills and ridges, a tumultuous expanse of baked mud" cut by "alkaline rivelets."[28] The comments of those in charge of the cumbersome supply wagons were, unfortunately, not recorded, but were doubtless more emphatic and colourful. In any case, the surveyors were in place to begin work late in June.

The two boundary survey parties worked steadily westwards from Rock Creek, setting up their stone marker cairns at regular intervals along the line. By September, the entire prairie sector was completed. The British contingent then proceeded to Wood Mountain before returning east, there having been (unfounded) rumours that the Cree might attack isolated parties.[29] Before leaving, they sold their depot and supplies to the newly arrived North West Mounted Police.[30] Considering the importance of their activities, the work of the Boundary Commission surveyors, of both nationalities, was remarkably uneventful. Trouble with the Indians never went beyond the stage of rumours. Indeed, one band encountered by the British, after having ascertained that the survey was not for a railroad, expressed disappointment that the boundary was not to be "a wall or continuous bank."[31] Had they realized the full implications of a marked boundary line on the otherwise featureless prairie, they might not have been so complacent.

The Boundary Commission surveyors were technicians. They were assigned a specific task and carried it out with professional competence. They were also disinterested or neutral participants in the larger scheme of which they were a part. The possible effects of their actions were not their responsibility, and hence were ignored. Much the same can be said of the Canadian scientist who conducted the accompanying survey of the geology and resources of the border country. G.M. Dawson[32] was also a "technician." He was given a specific task to carry out and he did so with dispassionate professional competence. And, as with his surveyor colleagues, he suffered from a moderate case of tunnel vision. Unlike Palliser and Hind, Dawson had not been sent out to do a general study of the west as a whole. Rather, he was to examine one specific area - the strip north of the border - and ascertain what possibilities it offered for settlement. He might well have prefaced his report with the maxim "seek, and ye shall find."

The American boundary surveyors of 1873-74 concurred with Palliser and Hind, and their own national authorities, that the area between the Coteau and the fertile strip along the eastern base of the Rockies was unsuited for agricultural purposes, although they believed that it might be of some use as "grazing country."[33] Col. French of the North West Mounted Police, passing just north of the park area at the same time, agreed with them. "I think civilization will be hard pushed for room," he noted in his journal, "when it requires the coteau of the

Missouri; at least for agricultural purposes."[34] G.M. Dawson did not see eye to eye with either of these gentlemen, whose opinions were largely impressionistic, or with the authorities supporting their statements, whose conclusions were not drawn from personal observation. He had carefully examined the border country west of the Coteau himself, and his methods of appraisal were rigorously analytical.

On reading Dawson's report, one is immediately impressed with his powers of observation and insight. While allowing that the broken Coteau zone itself "must always remain unsuited to agriculture" and of limited use for stock-raising,[35] he was not so pessimistic about the Wood Mountain plateau to the west: the "great plateau of the Lignite Tertiary," as he labelled it. The reason for this qualified optimism was his ability to see past the obvious. To begin with, Dawson pointed out that the barren appearance of the area was due to a lack of rainfall, rather than poor soil quality *per se*. He was the first to make this distinction. "The soil of the plateau" he noted "appears as a rule to be of a fertile character, but the indicators are that the rainfall, except in a few favoured spots, is too small for the growth of the ordinary crops."[36] Without saying so directly, he implied that special agricultural techniques might turn at least part of the area into productive farmland. Secondly, the geologist recognized the potential economic value of the empty grasslands, again, being the first in Wood Mountains case to do so (in print). He stated that "The plateau ... is for the most part only adapted for pastoral occupation; but being covered with a good growth of grass, is well suited for this use," as was "the strip of country between the plateau and the southern edge of the Coteau [the Old Wives Plain]."[37] Nor was grass the only resource in the area rendering it fit for such occupation. "An important advantage of this plateau" he noted "is the existence along its edges of sheltered ravines and vallies, containing groves of poplar; and also the presence beneath it of great deposits of lignite coal."[38] This meant that shelter from the winter winds, wood for buildings and fences, and coal for heating were available. Altogether, the park area was presented in a very favourable light.

Dawson's appraisal of the park area's potential for settlement was a complete reversal of that implicit in Hind's and, to a slightly lesser extent, in Palliser's reports. In part, this was simply due to new information. Members of Palliser's expedition had emphasized the probable importance of local variation in the inner triangle. The Wood Mountain plateau was a physiographic feature creating such environmental variation, but the earlier expeditions had either not known of its existence, or had not fully appreciated its possible significance.[39] The reversal can also be attributed, in part, to the changes which had taken place in the 15 years separating their work. During this time developments in the southern interior had significantly altered the relative value of the area; and, therefore, the ways in which it might possibly be used. By 1874 the buffalo were obviously on the decline. In fact, Dawson was overly optimistic in suggesting that the herds would last another 12 or 14 more years, for he assumed that the "rate of extermination" would remain the same.[40] He did not allow for the accelerating effect of an increasing demand on a dwindling supply. In any case, the prospect of their disappearance raised the possibility of introducing ranching and farming to the area, particularly the former. In addition, the imminent rail-link between eastern and western Canada offered the prospect of markets for western produce, which would make such operations economically feasible; albeit the distance of the border country from the then-projected route of the railway (through the northern parkland) gave an advantage to stock-raising for the foreseeable future. Dawson took these developments for granted, and appraised the resources of the park area accordingly.

The difference between Dawson's and the earlier explorers' general conclusions cannot, however, be fully explained by the new information available when, and the changed conditions under which, the later report was written. The fact remained that the park area was semi-arid, and subject to pronounced fluctuations in precipitation. Dawson himself noted the results of the drought conditions of 1874, in which the area west of the Wood Mountain plateau was reduced to an "arid plain."[41] Yet he evidently did not consider this characteristic significant in terms of permanent settlement. It might be concluded that Dawson was leaning heavily on Palliser and Hind here, assuming that his readers would be familiar with and take into account the latter's general descriptions of the area, but this was not the case. In his own general description of the inner triangle Dawson noted that the Boundary Commission explorations,

> have served to show, that this country, formerly considered almost absolutely desert, is not - with the exception of a limited area - of this character, that part of it may be of future importance agriculturally, and that a great part is well suited for pastoral occupation and stock farming.[42]

In other words, he explicity rejected Palliser's and Hind's findings. The only alternative explanation is that Dawson simply was not concerned with the problem; that, first, it was not part of his task to deal with negative elements and, second, that he assumed any problems to be solvable, given accurate data, and sufficient time. His role was to estimate potential, not to supply the solutions themselves.

Had Dawson's report suffered the fate of most academic literature, and simply gathered dust on a bookshelf, his proposals would not have mattered a great deal. However, his favourable appraisal of the inner triangle rapidly became an article of faith with Western propagandists. Until settlers actually put it to the test it remained as conjectural as Palliser's, but it was more in tune with the buoyant mood of the period. John Macoun, in particular, was instrumental in popularizing Dawson's picture of the southwest.

A botanist in the employ of the Dominion Government, said Macoun did not actually visit the southern plains until 1879, and even then he did not penetrate as far as the border. Nonetheless, as early as 1876 he had become a vocal opponent of the 'desert' theory, and in 1877 his views on Palliser's Triangle were put forward as the semi-official opinion in the annual report on the Canadian Pacific Railway surveys then in progress under Sanford Fleming.[43] In 1880 Macoun's campaign was given even more credibility when he was favourably cited, at length, in the Annual Report of the Minister of the Interior. This stated that,

> The result of his [Macoun's] enquiries, briefly stated, is to show that what has hitherto been regarded as an arid plain contains much productive land ... In fact, the portion of the so-called American Desert which extends

> northerly into Canadian territory, is proved to have no existence as such, for in the very worst parts of the country many tracts of good soil were found, and almost invariably the grass was rich and nutritive, offering excellent facilities for stock raising.[44]

In his weighty propaganda tract *Manitoba and the Great North-West* (1882), Macoun's comments on the park area were taken word for word from Dawson's 1875 report, although the latter's "great deposits" of coal were transformed into "vast" ones.[45]

Macoun's enthusiasm got the better of him at times, as when he lightly proposed that a settler in the south could "raise fat cattle without an hour's labor."[46] Nonetheless, he had a considerable following: including, evidently, Supt. James M. Walsh of the North West Mounted Police at Wood Mountain post. Few of the early police reports from the park area make reference to its potential for stock-raising or agriculture, the Sioux problem being rather more immediate at the time. An exception is Walsh's annual report for 1880, just before he left the post. In a lengthy paragraph he took Alexander Begg's argument regarding the comparative advantages of the Bow River and Montana country for grazing (essentially that given as a chapter in Macoun's *Manitoba*),[47] and discussed the Wood Mountain country in the same terms. Just as Begg rated the Bow River range over Montana's, so did Walsh consider that in the vicinity of Wood Mountain better than the Bow River's. On the basis of his experience with police cattle and gardens Walsh asserted that,

> Wood Mountain is a stock-raising as well as an agricultural district ... horses and cattle and sheep can run the hills during the winter months without any danger of perishing by storm, by cold or by want of grass.

As for the summer,

> The grass of Wood Mountain is as good, if not superior, to that of Bow River, and Wood Mountain has the great advantage ... by being 400 miles nearer to eastern markets ... No part of Montana ... can produce a more nutritious grass, and hills and valleys more abundantly supplied, than Wood Mountain, added to which it is fertile from its western to its eastern limit. Both valley and benchland can be cultivated.

Like Dawson, Walsh concluded his dissertation with a discourse on the beneficial effect of sheltered valleys, and the availability of timber and coal.[48]

Walsh's highly favourable appraisal of the park area was the first such opinion which was based on a substantial amount of experience by its author. The superintendent had actually resided there for three years on a more-or-less permanent basis, and his men had planted a garden and run a small herd of ration cattle and oxen, in addition to their horses. This experience certainly gave him more authority than Macoun, and even Dawson. In repeating their statements word for word, however, Walsh makes the reader wonder how much thought he actually gave to the matter. It may be that he was simply repeating the "official" position, as befit a responsible (if then somewhat unpopular) servant of the government. In any case, his comments certainly reflected the prevailing climate of opinion on the eve of the disappearance of the buffalo and the wholesale removal of the Indians from the park area. The Dominion lands surveyors, who arrived shortly thereafter, came to slightly different conclusions.

Dominion Lands Surveys

It is arguable that the Dominion lands survey of the prairies was the single most-important factor in incorporating the region into the new Dominion of Canada. The field crews which carried out this enormous task literally walked over every square mile of the West. As they did so, they mapped it, described it in detail, and chopped it up into regulation-sized pieces. The basis of the sectional survey, "having in view the future welfare of the country," was "a system under which the country could be rapidly and accurately subdivided into farm holdings."[49] This consisted of six-mile-square "townships," each made up of 36-mile-square "sections," each of which was divided into four "quarter-sections" of 160 acres each. The townships were uniformly numbered by their location in rows north of the 49th Parallel (the First Baseline), and by that in columns (ranges) west of a referent Meridian; in the case of the park area the Third (106° W long). The number 4-3 W3, for example, identifies the fourth township north of the border in the third range of townships west of the Third Meridian; which is the township containing Wood Moutain post (in section 20). The importance of this system is fairly obvious. To put it succinctly, it imposed an element of uniformity on the western landscape where none had hitherto existed.

The process of surveying the plains involved four consecutive steps. First, the primary lines - north-south meridians every 200-odd miles west of Winnipeg, and east-west baselines every 24 miles north of the border - were marked in. This was a task for special crews. Secondly, outlines of four-township-square blocks (16 townships) were surveyed. Thirdly, the townships within the blocks were drawn in and, finally, the individual townships were subdivided into sections and quarters. This 'piecework' was contracted out to individual surveyors and their crews, with fixed rates per unit being established after 1882. The time required to fully survey a given area varied, although in most cases two or three summer seasons were required for all of the work to be completed. The efficiency of the system can be seen in the fact that in 1883 alone (the peak year), 27 million acres of western land were brought into it, this acreage lying within the 70,000 miles of lines surveyed.[50]

In the park area, the bulk of the surveying was done in 1881-83: beginning as soon as the last of the Sioux had vacated the district. Many individual surveyors were involved in this work at different stages.[51] Generally speaking, it proceeded from north to south and from east to west through the area. In 1881 T. Drummond did the block outlines of the townships of range one W3 (the Meridian having been done earlier by a special survey party), and in 1882 the majority of those along and north of the Third Baseline (the northern edge of township eight) were completed. T. Fawcett and A.F. Cotton did much of the latter work. The big year, however, was 1883. In seven or eight months of surveying, the Second Baseline (the north edge of township four) was run by O.J. Klotz, the remaining block outlines for the rest of the area were completed, and all of the township outlines in the area were marked in. A.O. Wheeler, for example, did all of those between the Third and Fourth baselines.[52] At the same time, subdivision surveys were being done along the northern edge of the area, with the four northwestern townships (9-10, rge. 13-15 W3, inclusive) being completed before the end of the year.

As well as being the last step in the process of surveying, subdivision was a significant one in that of agricultural settlement. The land distribution system of interspersed free homestead and Dominion and corporate sale lands could not be implemented until the sectional grid was laid out. Once this had been done, townships (with minor exceptions) were automatically opened up. While settlers could move in beforehand, they could not gain ownership of their chosen land (or know its exact boundaries) until the subdivision had been completed. By the end of 1883, this was the only step remaining in the park area and, normally, subdivision would have been carried out the next year. To do so, however, might have had serious consequences if the area was, in fact, unsuitable for agriculture. In 1883 the officials of the Department of the Interior were forced to set aside speculation as to the actual character of the park area and to make a specific decision on the matter.

Generally speaking, there was a consensus among the later explorers that the park area was good grazing country. It was thought by some that agriculture might also be possible, and even very successful, but there was little certainty on this point. The specifics of the problem simply had not been adequately considered. In 1883, however, O.J. Klotz conducted a survey of the Second Baseline, which cut straight across the south-central part of the park area. It is evident that he had been ordered to pay particular attention to these aspects. His range-by-range description of the land from the Frenchman to Wood Mountain settlement provided a comprehensive cross-section of the area.

Klotz was impressed by the "rich vegetation of grass," which visibly improved as he moved from west to east towards Wood Mountain.[53] He concurred with the earlier explorers that "the lands along the international boundary ... have been underrated," and noted that "the popular belief of 'Bad Lands' along the White Mud River is erroneous."[54] At the same time, though, he was not blind to the drawbacks of the area, especially with regard to the availability of good water. Working in mid-August, he observed that most of the streams had ceased to flow, that some of the ponded waters remaining were alkaline;[55] and that, in any event, most of the water in the area was at the bottom of steep coulees and valleys, making access difficult. Given the semi-arid character of the country, these were serious obstacles to agricultural development. Klotz offered the sound advice that,

> It will be found an impossibility to irrigate those parts of the North-West which are destitute of water in the summer. In the first place, the water supply of all streams ..., during the summer, is very limited; secondly - and which is of more importance - all the streams lie far below the surrounding prairie - from 50 to 500 feet - so that it is an impossibility to construct irrigation ditches from them.[56]

Since adequate dryland farming techniques had yet to be developed, this seemed to indicate that the border country (including the park area) should be reserved for grazing purposes, to which it was well adapted.

Klotz's judicious report, in combination with the information supplied by contract surveyors, appears to have tipped the balance against opening the border country to agricultural settlement, for the time being at least. With the exception of tp. 4-3 W3, done in 1886 at the special request of J.L. Legare (Ch. 2), no further subdivision survey work was done in the park area between 1883 and 1906. In effect, all of the land south of the township 17 line was reserved for grazing.[57] This measure was undoubtedly influenced, as well, by the collapse of the first boom in 1883 (which meant that the demand for land so far from the Canadian Pacific Railway was likely to be negligible for some time to come), and by the shift in climatic patterns which occurred at about the same time. A dry cycle set in which returned the inner triangle to its 'normal' state after a decade of relatively wet weather, during which, of course, Macoun and Walsh had made their optimistic appraisals.[58] In any case, the decision to reserve the border country for cattle was undoubtedly a wise one. One shudders at the thought of homesteaders attempting to make a living on the Old Wives Plain in the mid-1880s and 1890s, lacking even the rudiments of dryland expertise and technology. The resulting disaster would probably have made the "Dirty Thirties" seem like a picnic by comparison. O.J. Klotz, however, recognized that the reservation of the park area for grazing was only a temporary measure. At the end of his report he prophetically noted:

> Many lands have been classed as grazing lands which undoubtedly will, when the population in the North-West increases, be to a great extent absorbed as agricultural lands, as has been done in the neighboring Republic.[59]

Being a good technician, he assumed that future developments would make such expansion possible, and, perhaps wisely, did not hazard a guess as to its wisdom.

Conclusions

The exploration period drew to a close in 1883 with the park area thoroughly mapped and described. Thereafter, as John Warkentin puts it, "the views and words of outsiders on the land had less and less significance ... What counted were the aspirations, accomplishments and conceptions of the people who lived ... within the region."[60] Those scientists who ventured into the park area after 1883 were concerned with specific features: McConnell (1885) applying himself to the study of its geology, and Rose (1914) to its coal.[61] The work of the explorers and surveyors, from Palliser to Klotz, had been a curious mixture of concrete accomplishments and ephemeral speculations. On the one hand, they had put the area on the map, boldly drawing artificial lines across the plains and, in so doing, fundamentally altering the character of the region. After they had finished, the western interior was transformed. One line had cut it into separate and distinct

"Canadian" and "American" sectors - estranged political and economic entities. Another, the Canadian Pacific Railway, had diverted the natural lines of communications and mutual interest from the south to the north. Others had cut the land up into small uniform parcels, counters in the highly popular game of white settlement and development. The effects of this work were felt immediately, and they remain significant to this day.

What effect the explorers' and surveyors' evaluations of the park area had on its development, however, is less clear. Opinions varied over time, from Hind's pessimistic appraisal to Macoun's optimistic one. Those who actually visited the park area - Dawson, Walsh and Klotz - were generally less inclined to take an extreme position. They saw it as excellent grazing country with some potential for agriculture, how much, exactly, being open to question. But all of these men, visitors and non-visitors alike, were outsiders. They were operating far in advance of the frontier of settlement and, therefore, their views were expounded in a vacuum. The necessary ingredient for a valid evaluation of the resources of the park area was practice, not theory. The first important decision made affecting the settlement of the area was that taken in 1883, to reserve it for ranching. Between 1883 and 1908 the first true 'experts' on its potential were created: the ranchers. Unfortunately for all concerned, their practical expertise was largely ignored when the time came to make a second decision on the suitability of the park area for agricultural settlement. In 1908 the Macoun school of thought remained alive and well. That subscribed to by Palliser, Hind and hundreds of local ranchers was shunted aside but only for a quarter-century.

CHAPTER VI THE RANCHING FRONTIER

Introduction

Cattle ranching began in the park area in the 1880s. Explorers, surveyors and police officers had been voicing the idea for more than a decade and, by the mid-1880s, its time had come. At last, there were not more "useless" buffalo to eat the valuable grass, and no "blood-thirsty" Indians to harass honest cattlemen and savage their herds. The North West Mounted Police, rid of the Sioux, were in a position to give all of their attention to rustlers and other riffraff, and to generally assist and protect the new industry. Most importantly, the Canadian Pacific Railway was in operation: its line being near enough for convenience, and far enough away to discourage farmers from coming in.[1] Ranching was a natural development for the park area. In effect, it involved a reoccupation of the ecological niche lately vacated by the bison on the grasslands. The extermination of the buffalo had not affected the grasses on which they had thrived, and these were known to be of excellent quality. P.S. Long later wrote that, in the summer,

> The great range for endless miles was one of the finest on the continent. The grass grew thick, about a foot high, and was of the strongest variety in the West.

When cured by the hot July winds, it also provided a nutritious source of fodder for the long, cold winters.[2] Good grass, however, while very important, does not itself ensure success in ranching.

Chester Martin has called ranching "one of the most precarious industries of a frontier community."[3] Between the natural hazards such as blizzards, droughts, wolves, alkali poisoning and exposure - and human ones - such as rustlers, lease cancellation, falling prices, shrinking bank credit and municipal herd laws - which threatened ranchers, it is something of a miracle that ranching was able to establish itself in the park area and, once established, to continue for 90-odd years. It was able to do so largely because of the diversity of its composition and the adaptability which its individual members constantly displayed. There have been four distinct stages in the development of local ranching in the park area since the 1880s. Each of these involved a slightly different ranching population facing a different set of problems. The first, from 1884 to about 1899, was a period of successful experimentation by small British and Canadian ranchers. The second, from 1900 to 1907, was one of expansion, involving both large and small American ranchers, and culminating in a double disaster. The third period, extending from 1908 to the mid-1920s was a time of retreat and readjustment, as farmers poured into the area. The last period, from the late 1920s to the present, began with a complete disaster which, in time, led to a new stability for stockraisers; at a price. While the local ranching industry has had many problems, stagnation has not been one of them.

The Early Years 1884-99

The ranching industry in the park area had its roots in the 1880s, but did not get properly underway until the 1890s. The period 1884-99 was one of free grass, small owner-operated ranches, and many false starts. Cattlemen were getting the "feel" of the area, and most were fully occupied with the demands of everyday survival. Individual enterprise was a particularly important factor during this period. Starting a ranch was a one-man or one-family operation and little, if any, outside assistance or capital was involved. Once started, ranchers were on their own, literally, for their nearest neighbours were likely to be many miles away. The North West Mounted Police played a major role in the development of the ranching community during these early years. The regular patrols visited isolated ranches, kept an eye out for trouble of any kind, and rendered assistance at need. Moreover, the police post at Wood Mountain provided work, a local market for beef, and a social centre, and many ex-members of the force tried their hand at ranching in the district. By the turn of the century, a great deal had been accomplished by way of settling the park area.

The first cattle in the Wood Mountain country were apparently strays from Montana. They were first reported by members of the Boundary Commission, although some may have been in the area earlier.[4] In 1874 G.M. Dawson encountered a herd of Texas longhorns, formerly belonging to the United States Army, which had wintered in the park area. He noted that,

> They were quite wild ... and not withstanding the fact that they had originally come from Texas, and were unaccustomed to frost and snow, they had passed through the winter and were in excellent condition.[5]

Longhorns had first been brought into northern Montana in 1869, and by the early 1870s were present on the northern ranges in substantial numbers.[6] Dawson observed that "stock is there systematically allowed to winter out independently, or with only very slight aid in the way of food," and concluded that this practice was also feasible in the Wood Mountain country.[7]

Until the Indians had been cleared from the border region and the Canadian Pacific Railway was in full operation, there was little point in trying to start ranching. The only cattle mentioned in the park area until the mid-1880s were those in a small police herd maintained in the late 1870s.[8] Ever the pioneer, Jean-Louis Legare was the first to introduce a true commercial herd. In 1884 he went to Manitoba (probably the Virden district), and traded 100 horses for 45 head of cattle, which he put out to pasture near Willow Bunch.[9] It is probable that he wanted these in order to supply beef to Regina. Two years later, Legare was joined at Rabbit Coulee by Pascal Bonneau Sr. who started his ranch with four horses and four head of cattle.[10] Bigger things, however, were on the way. In 1887 a stock-raising company was formed at Willow Bunch by six investors, who had 80 head on a leased range in the first year. During the same year, Legare began moving his cattle away from Willow Bunch northeast, into a fenced pasture.[11]

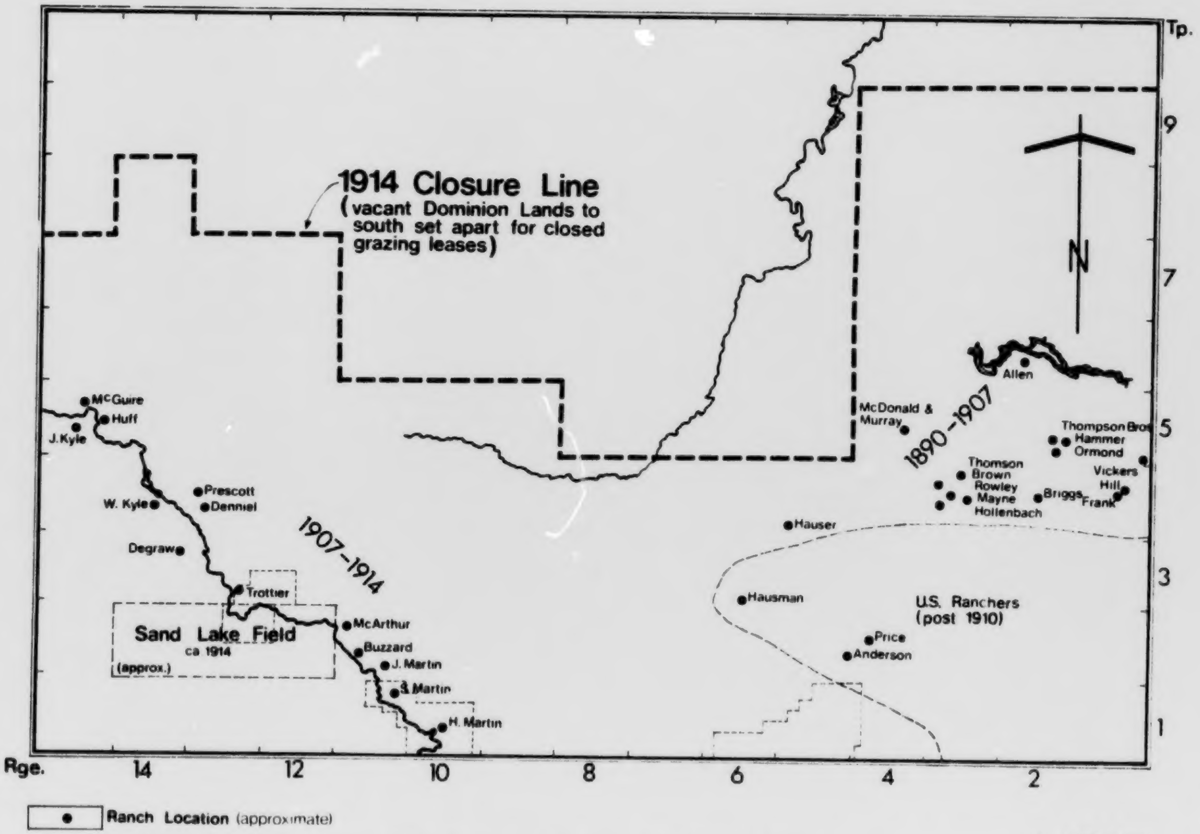
While Willow Bunch was becoming a cattle emporium, in a small way, some activity was taking place at Wood Mountain. In 1886 the *London Times* reported that the country southwest of Moose Jaw was "so entirely unoccupied that the sensation of the want of inhabitants becomes positively painful,"[12] but their correspondent was obviously not cowboy material. Commissioner Herchmer, in his report for 1886, commented on the ranching prospects in the Wood Mountain country. "While at first it was considered that only a small tract of country in the west was suitable for wintering cattle," he noted, "large herds are now wintering as far west as Wood Mountain ... I have every reason to believe that Wood Mountain will in future feed large herds of cattle."[13] The cattle referred to as being near Wood Mountain in the winter of 1885-86 were probably strays from the "76" ranch at Crane Lake (then owned by the Powder River Ranch Co. of Wyoming),[14] whose animals continued to wander in and out of the area for another 20 years.

Commissioner Herchmer was not the only one to appreciate the high quality of the Wood Mountain range. At the time that his report was being made the first American cattle outfit was moving into the park area. A severe drought had been experienced in Montana in the summer of 1886.[15] The range having been overstocked to begin with, large numbers of cattle were moved north across the line. Some 6,000 cattle and 250 horses were brought to Wood Mountain by the Home Land and Cattle Company (N-N) of St. Louis, which established a base camp in a coulee six miles west of the post.[16] Their timing, though, was not particularly good. The winter of 1886-87 was exceptionally severe, and cattle losses were heavy. In the summer of 1887 most of the remaining Wood Mountain herd was sold off in Regina. The police purchased 40 of the N-N's horses, and reported that "their band is practically broken up."[17] This process was complete by 1888, when the North West Mounted Police noted that "There are no cattle left in the Wood Mountain District, those of the Home Land and Cattle Company having been removed to Rock Creek, south of the boundary line."[18] The police purchased the company's Six-Mile Coulee buildings at this time, moving one of them to the post.[19] The N-N brand continued to be a familiar sight in the Wood Mountain country, for one of their base camps was just across the line,[20] but the Home Land and Cattle Company's removal in 1887-88 marked the end of American efforts to expand into the Wood Mountain country for more than a decade. The problem was not that the latter had proven to be poor range, but that the severe losses experienced by Montana ranchers in 1886-87 "retarded the buildup of a surplus breeding stock ..., and therefore, the expansion of the ranching industry to new ranges such as Wood Mountain."[21] For the moment, the development of the area was solely in the hands of local entrepreneurs.

The record of early "private" ranching in the park area is fragmentary and, at times, contradictory but two important points are readily descernible: that the North West Mounted Police were instrumental in promoting ranching, and that few (if any) of the first ranchers were Americans. The extent and general significance of the police patrol network established in the Wood Mountain country after 1885 has been discussed at length elsewhere in this study. This system was extremely important in providing an atmosphere of security for ranchers during the open range period. As D.H. Breen notes, "The nature of the cattlemen's occupation was such as to require greater protection on a day-to-day basis than was needed by any other economic group."[22] The police did an exceptional job in furnishing this protection, but they also made a more direct contribution to the development of the industry. One local historian noted that, "It was ex-members of the police force who launched the ranching industry about Wood Mountain."[23] He was not far wrong. The few early ranchers who were not police veterans had worked for the force at some point in their careers.

At least three different individuals are credited by different local sources with having started the first ranch in the immediate vicinity of Wood Mountain. They include Edward "Buffalo" Allen, Fred Brown, and Samuel Briggs. The first two were former police constables who had served at Wood Mountain post during the Sioux occupation. Allen, who received his nickname for killing a buffalo calf with a knife, was English, and had been apprenticed to a butcher before coming to Canada. Leaving the North West Mounted Police in the early 1880s, he had started a store at Estevan with his wife, but in 1886 or 1887 moved his business to Wood Mountain. Since the police post required beef, Allen started a small herd of cattle in 1888 or 1889, and later developed this into a modest ranch operation which was located in the vicinity of Six-Mile Coulee.[24] Allen's fellow ex-constable Fred Brown had a slightly different career, but also ended up as a rancher. Brown was from Ontario, and had taken part in the "Long March" of 1874. After two enlistments with the police, during which he served at both Fort Walsh and Wood Mountain, he 'retired' in 1884 or 1885. Then, when the telegraph line was built from Moose Jaw to Wood Mountain in 1885, Brown signed on as a lineman, a post which he held until 1901. Later on, he acted as a mail carrier and cook for the police, but in the late 1880s he also turned his attention to cattle. When William Ogle passed by in 1888 Brown was in Manitoba helping another ex-constable, Jack Glass, to deliver horses. He evidently saw a future in the stock business, for in 1889 or 1890 (probably the fall of 1889) he purchased 150 head of cattle in Montana and drove them to Wood Mountain. These provided the nucleus for a ranch located close to the police post, which he operated until his retirement in 1921.[25] The third man with a claim to being the first rancher was a "civilian." Samuel Briggs was from Yorkshire and, after coming to Canada, first went to the Cannington Manor Colony (near Moose Mountain). When the railway came through, however, he moved to Regina where he received a contract to freight supplies to the Wood Mountain post. By 1888 Briggs had decided to settle permanently in the south, and by 1890 had a horse ranch seven miles east of the police post. This ranch was in operation until his death in 1919.[26]

The facts available suggest that the first ranchers at Wood Mountain were, to begin with, dividing their attention between wage-earning jobs provided by the police (indirectly, in Allen's case), and stock-raising. Since cattle were simply turned loose to fend for themselves in both summer and winter, this was easily done, but the procedure makes it impossible to pin the label of "first" on any specific individual. It is unlikely, though, that any of their ranches were in full operation until 1890, for in 1889 the police report noted that, "The nearest ranch is some 60 miles north, situated on Old Wives Creek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1914 Closure Line
(vacant Dominion Lands to south set apart for closed grazing leases)
1890-1907
1907-1914
McGuire
Huff
J. Kyle
Prescott
W. Kyle
Denniel
Degraw
Trottier
Sand Lake Field
ca 1914
(approx.)
McArthur
Buzzard
J. Martin
S. Martin
H. Martin
Allen
McDonald & Murray
Thompson Bros
Hammer
Ormond
Vickers
Hill
Frank
Briggs
Thomson
Brown
Rowley
Mayne
Hollenbach
Hauser
Hausman
U.S. Ranchers
(post 1910)
Price
Anderson
● Ranch Location (approximate)

FIG. 10 Small Ranching in the Park Area, ca 1890-1914

1/2" = 1 mi.

[Wood River] where it runs into the lake," and the only other settler reported in the vicinity was one who had recently arrived at Fife Lake[27] - the post commander obviously not taking familiar faces around the post into account nor those at Willow Bunch. Ranching activity in the latter area was steadily increasing, also due, in part, to the North West Mounted Police. Not only was Pascal Bonneau expanding his herd, having gotten a police beef contract at about this time, but two of his sons both started their own ranches nearby about 1889.[28]

Once these pioneers had shown the way, many others followed. In the early 1890s new ranches began to appear in quick succession. Many of those involved were also ex-policemen, notably James H. "Jimmy" Thomson.[29] Thomson, like his friend Fred Brown, was from Ontario, had taken part in the Long March, had served at Fort Walsh and Wood Mountain, and on receiving his discharge had returned to the latter location. Thomson took lessons from the first post telegrapher, J.S. Macdonald, and in 1891 had taken over the job himself. He held the position (and sundry others) until 1914, but in the early 1890s developed a sideline in horses and cattle.[30] His first venture seems to have been a partnership with David "Dub" Mayne. Mayne was still in uniform serving with the Wood Mountain detachment, but apparently had either the time or money to involve himself in business.[31] At about the same time, Thomson seems to have started up his own operation. This involved wintering and breeding horses, and a number of mares and a stallion were provided by North West Mounted Police officers. But, as William Ogle put it, "Jimmie had these horses for a number of years, but he was no stockman, and the horses were not the right kind ... I think the men who sent them lost their money."[32] Another ex-policeman by the name of Bushby, and an unnamed partner, were at Wood Mountain in the winter of 1892 investigating the possibility of starting a ranch in the spring.[33] Unfortunately, nothing further is known about this venture, unless Fred Rowley, an ex-constable who started a cattle ranch in 1892 or 1893, was the aforementioned partner.[34]

By 1892-93 the ranching industry around Wood Mountain seems to have been firmly established, as was indicated by the arrival of several non-veteran, non-local ranchers. The first of these were two brothers, R. and J.B. Thompson, and one Rafelshay or Raffeljie, who set up together at Elm Springs in 1892. They had trekked in from Fort Pelly in the summer and, by the end of the year, had 330 head of cattle on the range.[35] About a year later, L. Hammer joined them at the Springs[36] and, in 1895, two ranchers from the Touchwood Hills arrived. McDonald and Murray established themselves eight miles northwest of the post with 76 cattle.[37] This burst of new activity does not seem to have been affected in any great degree by the severe winter of 1893-94.[38] It may be that J.L. Legare was the only one in the district hard-hit because he was the only one with a substantial herd at the time. Legare had been doing very well to this point, having expanded his herd with Montanan cattle, and had built a cheese factory at Willow Bunch in 1891 but in 1893-94 he lost 350 milk cows. This seems to have convinced him that large-scale open-range ranching was not practical in the area, for in 1894 he sold 1,125 head to the Bonneaus and others and switched over completely to horses.[39] Legare, however, was evidently the exception, for Father Rondeau notes that even the local Métis, spurred by the example of their English and French neighbours, were going into cattle ranching at this time.[40]

It is impossible to discuss the early years of ranching at Wood Mountain without mentioning William Ogle, whose operation eventually became "the largest one in the Wood Mountain country, and its owner ... the 'king bee' in all the activities of the mountain district - political, social or business."[41] "Lord" Ogle was another English expatriate. The youngest son of a prominent family, he left Rugby School at the age of 17 to try his hand in the Northwest. Like Briggs, he first went to Cannington Manor, but soon came to the conclusion that "I might nearly as well have stayed in England, if the life there was all I was going to see and do."[42] Joining up with Jack Glass and Fred Brown at Virden in 1888, he travelled to Wood Mountain and wintered there. The next summer he went to Montana and, after working on an N-N roundup, set up a small ranch of his own. This lasted about two years, until Ogle "woke up one day to find I had neighbours on each side of me."[43] Such overcrowding was not to be borne and, after a reconnaisance of South Dakota, Ogle returned to Wood Mountain to settle. In 1891 or 1892 he bought out Edward Allen's ranch, including his house and stock. Allen moved to Twelve Mile Lake, establishing the Allendale Ranch. Ogle apparently did not find everything to his liking for, in 1896, he went to Montana with Harry McDonald and started yet another ranch. However, two years later he sold out and returned to Wood Mountain, setting up operations seven miles west of the post. By 1891 he had increased his horse herd substantially by purchasing stock in Montana, and thereafter remained one of the major small ranchers in the district.[44]

William Ogle's second 'retreat' into the Wood Mountain country was not an isolated incident. The modest growth in the 1890s turned, at the end of the century, into a veritable stream of new ranchers. In 1899 Supt. J. Howe of Regina reported that, "In the Wood Mountain and Willow Bunch district quite a number of new settlers have come in, and are, I hear, going in for ranching on an extensive scale."[45] Among these new arrivals, in 1898-99, were H.L. Mable, Michael Ormond or Orman of Elm Springs, J.A. Mullett, L. Haggert, and Enoch Vickers of Scout Lake. It also appears that Sgt. L. Watson at the post was dabbling in cattle.[46] The Wood Mountain port of entry was very busy at this time, with more than $7,000 in customs duties being collected on 2,154 horses imported from the United States. The traffic was not one-sided, for Watson was able to report that, "Quite a number of cattle were sold in this district to American buyers, and driven across to Montana points for shipping. The prices realized by ranchers were fair."[47] It is evident that the scale and extent of the ranching industry in and about Wood Mountain had changed considerably since the early years of the decade.

The turn of the century found the ranching industry in the Wood Mountain country solidly established, and growing by leaps and bounds. Despite several severe winters, a number of summers when prairie fires destroyed a good part of the grass in the district,[48] the competition of American cattle which periodically drifted north onto Canadian range,[49] and the general isolation of the area, pioneer ranchers succeeded in establishing themselves. Thanks to the aforementioned isolation, and the natural tendency of local historians to record success, rather than failure, the rate of attrition among early ranchers will probably never be known. Since only experienced men - and a very hardy breed of women - seem to have been willing to face the risks involved, it may not have been unduly high. In any case, it is certain that the survivors, at least, were eminently successful in adapting to their environment, making the most of its advantages and rolling with the punches dealt by a sometimes hostile climate. It is easy to see why this way of life has sometimes been idealized. In many ways, it was the perfect compromise between the subsistence economy of the Indians and Métis and the intensive commercial one of prairie farming, combining the resource base of the one with the economic system of the other. Unfortunately, the combination proved to be an unstable one. The pattern of small ranching which developed in the park area in the 1890s was based on free grass and an abundance of underused range.[50] Its very success led to new developments which undermined these foundations.

Much of the historical literature on Canada's ranching frontier revolves around the ranchers' general problem of security of tenure: that is, of maintaining control over their range. The focus of this discussion is provided by the Dominion grazing lease. This was an agreement between the government, which owned most of the land, and the individual rancher, who needed more than he could usually afford to buy outright, giving the latter exclusive use of a given piece of Crown land for a specific period and at a specific price. The duration and price of these leases varied over time. Generally speaking, the timespan tended to decrease and the rate to increase as the farming frontier began to press against the periphery of the semi-arid zone. In Alberta, the large inexpensive 21-year "closed" lease dominated in the early 1880s, but by 1896 small, relatively expensive leaseholds were the rule, unlike the earlier ones, these were subject to termination at short notice.[51] In the Wood Mountain country, however, leasing did not even begin until well after the turn of the century.

The Wood Mountain area was well known as a ranching district by the end of the 1890s. Since the Willow Bunch area had at least 9,000 head of cattle and horses in 1903,[52] it is probably safe to say that at least as many were to be found on the Wood Mountain ranges and a higher figure might be closer to the truth. Yet, in 1902, only 160 acres were under grazing lease.[53] Why William Ogle even bothered to take out this much is something of a puzzle. It is evident that few of his neighbours did so then or later, and none at all felt a need for a lease before this date.[54] In 1889 the Department of the Interior had ordered

> that no person shall be allowed to graze stock of any kind on the public domain without the consent of the Minister of the Interior being first obtained, and that grazing the same will render them liable to siezure by the Crown and forfeiture by the owner.[55]

But Wood Mountain ranchers were not punished for their failure to comply with leasing requirements. It is therefore possible that the department (and the ranchers) took the fact that homesteaders were excluded from the area as tacit consent for such practices. A more likely explanation, however, is that grazing rights simply were not a problem with so few people and so much range, and that the department did not consider the possible returns of enforcement to be worth the effort it would require. Such a situation was not entirely unique. As Vrooman has noted, "most of the lands used for grazing in the [18-] seventies were free and a goodly proportion of them continued to be used in that way up to the turn of the century."[56] In the park area, free grass was the rule rather than the exception well into the first decade of the century.

The Golden Age 1900-1907

The second stage in the development of the ranching industry in the park area lasted from 1900 to 1907. It was a time of rapid expansion, which ended abruptly with the "carrion spring" of 1907. Small ranches continued to make up an important part of the industry, with many new ones appearing on the Wood Mountain ranges, but the newly arrived cattle companies dominated the picture for the time being. The capitalists and cowhands of the "Turkey Track," the "T-Bar Down" and the "76" ranches, among others, added a new note to stock-raising. If ranching in the park area can be said to have had a 'Golden Age', then this was it.

The main reason for all of this new activity was the fact that the Dominion Government and the dryland farmers, between them, had succeeded in driving the large ranchers out of the central plains and foothills of Alberta, and in restricting ranching generally by the turn of the century. The emigrant stockmen moved east, into areas which, due to recurring drought and non-irrigable terrain, were "obviously" unfit for farming. Although most went to the Cypress Hills area, many moved into the range east of it,[57] and, specifically, to the Frenchman River valley. They were joined by a number of Americans and American cattle companies who were experiencing similar problems in Montana and the Dakotas. The second factor contributing to the local boom was the general improvement in market conditions arising from the flood of new settlers coming to the prairies at this time. Farmers needed horses and breeding stock, while both the growing prairie cities and eastern ones needed meat. This led new and veteran ranchers alike to stock their range to the limits of its capacity. The natural increase in herds - high through most of the period - was supplemented by stock and feeder cattle brought in from the United States, Manitoba and Ontario to be fattened up on natural grass.[58] The risks involved in such procedures were evident, but a series of mild winters and constant high prices for beef made them seem worth taking.

Around Wood Mountain one part of the ranching industry continued to expand upon the foundation laid down before 1900. To the east of the settlement, Pascal Bonneau Sr. had 400 horses and 400 cattle by 1900, and his son Pascal Bonneau Jr. was running 5,000-6,000 head of cattle on the largest owner-operated ranch in southern Saskatchewan.[59] At Wood Mountain itself, the early ranchers continued to expand their operations, especially Ogle, who had almost 2,000 horses by 1902.[60] New ranchers also continued to come in. In 1900 alone eight new settlers arrived, and many new ranch brands were registered in the period 1901-3.[61] Of particular interest was the number of American ranchers now arriving. The Offersons and Hollenbachs, for example, came by covered wagon from South Dakota in 1904, checking in through the Wood Mountain port of entry. After having been cleared by the custom's officer (then Jimmy Thomson) and the veterinarian, they settled near the post with their herd. Like many settlers before them, the Offerson's

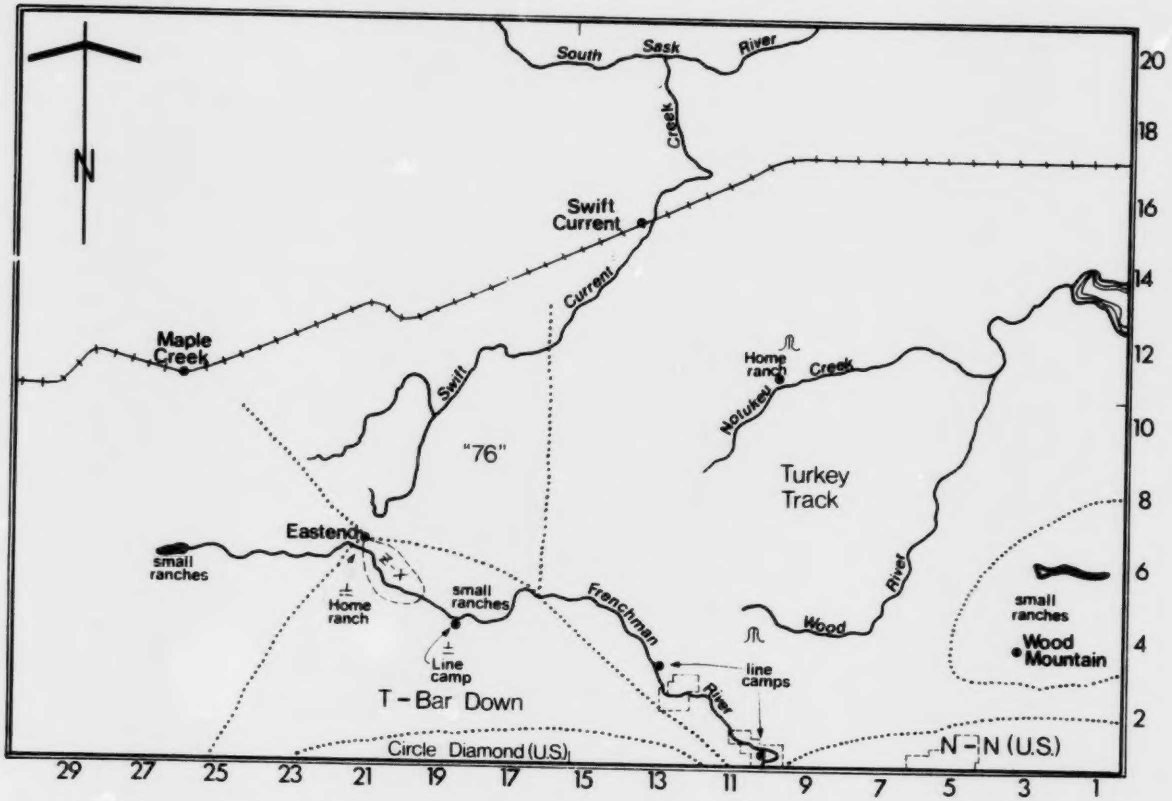
N
South Sask River
Creek
Swift Current
Current
Swift
Maple Creek
"76"
Home ranch
Notukeu Creek
Turkey Track
Eastend
small ranches
Z-X
Home ranch
small ranches
Line camp
T - Bar Down
Frenchman River
line camps
Wood River
small ranches
Wood Mountain
Circle Diamond (U.S.)
N - N (U.S.)
20
18
16
14
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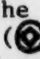
FIG. 11 Ranching in Southwestern Saskatchewan, ca. 1906

first cattle sale was to the police.[62] Two other new arrivals, the Hill and Frank families, were from Montana. In 1906 they trailed a herd of cattle to Wood Mountain and located on a ranch 15 miles east of the post. Like the Offersons and Hollenbachs, these families were experienced ranchers who already possessed sizeable numbers of horses and cattle, and who brought a full complement of household goods. In fact, the Hills even freighted in the building materials for their house from Glasgow.[63] Such settlers contributed greatly to the continued growth and development of the small ranch community around Wood Mountain. Other Americans, however, were working along different lines.

The Home Land and Cattle Company's attempt to expand into the Wood Mountain country in 1886-87 had been a failure. For 15 years thereafter the only cattle company stock found in the area was that which strayed over the line, or was driven in from the west by winter storms. The companies - including the American N-N and Circle Diamond and the Canadian "76" - sent in roundup crews to pick up their strays,[64] but did not treat the park area as part of their regular range. This situation changed abruptly with the arrival of the Creswell Cattle Company, whose ranch was better known by its brand ( ) as the "Turkey Track." This large American outfit had trailed north from Oklahoma in 1900, establishing itself near Medicine Hat. In 1902, one of its ranches, owned and managed by A.J. "Tony" Day, was established near the present site of Vanguard (tp. 11-10 W3) on Notukeu Creek. With winter camps at Seventy Mile Crossing (later Val Marie) and at the point where the Frenchman River crossed the border, the Turkey Track tacitly claimed all of the park area northwest of the Frenchman and north of the badlands as its range. This huge area was needed, for the ranch was initially stocked with 30,000 head of cattle. Although part of the breeding stock was sold off in 1904, the ranch consistently maintained between 20-30,000 over the next five years.[65] It is obvious that little grazing range was going to waste in the Wood Mountain area after 1902, although there is no evidence of any serious conflict with the local ranchers over who had the right to graze where. Indeed, since small ranchers continued to come into the area, it must be assumed that the full capacity of the grass and water resources was never quite reached.

While the Wood Mountain country was filling up, similar developments were taking place along the Frenchman River valley. The range in this district was at least as good as that to the northeast, since the river valley offered a sheltered winter pasture area to complement the summer grazing on the open plains. Due to its isolation, however, that along the lower river does not appear to have been used, except casually, until the late 1890s or early 1900s. In the same year that the Turkey Track ranch at Vanguard was established (1902), the Bloom Land and Cattle Company from Montana moved into the Eastend area, and established a line camp at Fifty Mile Crossing. Their ranch, better known as the "T-Bar Down" ( ), claimed the area between the Frenchman and the United States border as summer range for about 10,000 head. Conveniently, this bordered on the range of the Bloom Land and Cattle Company's American ranch, the Circle Diamond (). Since the Circle Diamond had been operating along the border for some time,[66] the T-Bar Down personnel were quite familiar with Canadian conditions. In any case, its two managers were both Americans - William "Buck" Hardin

(1902-6) being a Texan, and Harry Otterson (1906-7) a Montanan - as were almost all of their hands.[67]

When Harry Otterson came north in 1906, he found a thriving cattle industry underway in the Frenchman River valley. The Turkey Track, T-Bar Down and Circle Diamond ranches had the lower stretch of the river, below Stone Pile, to themselves; there being "a sort of gentlemen's agreement as to range lines."[68] A similar agreement existed further upstream, between the T-Bar Down and the "76" ranch (then based on the east branch of Swift Current Creek), but here the picture was complicated by the presence of a new, smaller cattle company and a considerable number of small ranchers. The company ranch was the Z-X, owned by the Enright Brothers and J.C. Strong of Montana. It was formed about 1904 around a nucleus of 1,500 cattle driven in by W.A. "Bill" Huff, its first manager, who was succeeded in 1906 by Buck Hardin (late of the T-Bar Down). The Z-X home ranch was located below Eastend on the River.[69] Between Stone Pile and Eastend there were also a considerable number of small ranches. As at Wood Mountain, many of these were run by expatriate Englishmen and ex-policemen.[70] In his reminiscences, Otterson nostalgically commented that, "All of the people were in the stock business, not a plowed field to be seen," and rated the area in 1906 as "prosperous, healthy and safe."[71] By the latter date, then, a vigorous ranching industry had expanded to cover the whole of the park area. A pocket of small ranchers was situated around Wood Mountain, and the rest of the area was controlled by the large outfits, with small ranchers beginning to advance down the Frenchman from the northwest.

If the fragmentary figures available are anywhere near to being correct, the number of cattle in the park area quadrupled, at least, between 1900 and 1906: from about 10,000 head to between 40,000 and 50,000.[72] Much of this, of course, was made up of imported stock such as the Turkey Track's but it must be remembered that the herds were being "harvested" each year,[73] and suffered normal losses from other causes. The steady increase therefore bespeaks a good replacement rate by natural increase, and a low rate of range losses. This was certainly the case between 1899 and 1906. In each year the increase in breeding stock for cattle in the district was regularly estimated at between 60 per cent and 75 per cent: meaning that approximately two-thirds of the mature cows produced calves each year. At the same time, the rate of losses - from winter conditions, accidents and age - ranged from a low of 2 per cent in 1901 to a high of 8 per cent in 1903. In 1902, as an example, the loss rate was 4.5 per cent, higher than the previous year "on account of so many yearlings from Ontario being on the range" and due to a minor plague of wolves. These moderate losses, though, were offset by a natural increase of more than 60 per cent.[74] The situation for horses was probably similar, and may have been better, during this period.

The run of good weather at the turn of the century could not last forever, and in the winter of 1903-4 the disadvantages of the park area's climate were amply demonstrated. In their report for 1904 the North West Mounted Police noted "a very large loss of stock" in the district in the previous winter.[75] This had come about through an unfortunate combination of circumstances. In the late summer of 1903 a vast prairie fire started by a railway locomotive in Montana burned north across the line. Peel has described it as "one of the worst ...

that ever swept through the Wood Mountain area": the Willow Bunch range in particular being thoroughly burnt out.[76] A wet fall and early frosts then left the range frozen solid. The winter which followed was the worst in a decade, and large numbers of cattle perished on the open range. Willow Bunch ranchers were the hardest hit, many losing the better part of their stock. It is worth noting, however, that the highest proportionate losses were taken by the eastern-bred cattle brought in as yearlings to feed. The problem was not severe winters as such, but rather a combination of ice, too much unsuitable stock and a complete lack of supplementary feed.[77] Significantly, the Willow Bunch ranchers did much better than their western neighbours later on, during the disastrous winter of 1906-7.[78]

By 1903 a number of problems attendant on more intensive range use were beginning to make themselves felt. Organized gangs of rustlers became a nuisance along the border for a time (Ch. 3). Also, the Police began to crack down on the illegal use of Canadian range by American cattle. This, of course, had been taking place for some time, but previously the North West Mounted Police had confined themselves to driving strays back across the border. With more Canadian cattle on the park area range, though, this was not sufficient. Not only was the American stock making inroads on His Majesty's grass, it was carrying infectious diseases. Mange was especially a problem. In 1903 the police were ordered by the commissioner to rigorously enforce border regulations on American cattle,[79] and in 1904 a substantial number of American cattle were seized by the Wood Mountain detachment. At the same time, Wood Mountain was declared the only legal port of entry through which American livestock could be entered along the border between Manitoba and southern Alberta, and mange-dipping vats and quarantine corrals were established to deal with the new volume of business.[80] By vigorous border patrolling and rigorous inspection, all of these problems were soon brought under control. After 1904, horses were almost the only American livestock being allowed into the park area.[81]

The summer of 1906 marked the apogee of ranching in the park area. Rustling, illicit border crossings and infectious cattle diseases were well under control, thanks to the constant attentions of the police. The range was well stocked, and the grass was still free. Few of the ranchers, large or small, evidently bothered to take out grazing leases[82] for, as A.A. Lupton put it, "They simply could not imagine that their operation would be endangered by settlers in a decidedly inhospitable environment for intensive farming."[83] Security of grazing rights, in other words, was not a matter for concern as long as ranchers were the only settlers in the area, and territorial problems between them could be resolved by "gentlemen's agreements." There seemed to be enough room for all. If any of the ranchers read the North West Mounted Police report for 1906, they may have been a little worried. In this, the Wood Mountain detachment reported that many homesteaders, travelling through the settlement on their way north, were "beginning to discover that the land around Wood Mountain is worth settling on, although so far from the railway."[84] But this was hardly a serous challenge. The area remained unsubdivided, and the Liberal government in Ottawa seemed to appreciate the danger of opening up the area to agricultural settlement. In 1905 it was decided that "closed" grazing leases (excluding homesteads) could be allowed in "certain areas deemed unfit for normal agriculture" by Lands Branch inspectors.[85] While few of the local ranchers availed themselves of this opportunity, the ruling must have seemed to them a guarantee of future security. That the Wood Mountain Uplands and Frenchman River Plain and valley would be classified as unfit for "normal" agriculture, in the event that homesteaders were allowed into the park area, seemed a foregone conclusion. It is to be hoped that the ranchers enjoyed themselves while they could, for it is unlikely that anyone could have predicted the sequence of misfortune which lay in their immediate future.

By all accounts, the summer and fall of 1906 were fairly normal, if wetter than usual. Due to two successive mild winters the cattle were in fairly good shape.[86] By miscalculation or inattention, some cattle were allowed onto valley pastures usually saved for winter grazing. This proved to be a costly mistake, but at the time cannot have appeared very serious. In any case, no unusual precautions were taken in preparing for the winter. After the fall roundup, it was estimated that there were about 23,000 - 25,000 Turkey Track, 10,000 T-Bar Down, 1,800 Z-X and 2,000-odd stray "76" cattle in the Wood Mountain and lower Frenchman River valley area, plus those belonging to the small ranchers. Except for a few calves, which were kept at home ranches and line camps to be fed during the winter, all of the cattle were turned free on the open range, under the loose control of a handful of line riders. These standard arrangements broke down completely within a very short time.[87]

The winter started off with a bang. A three-day blizzard in mid-November covered the prairie with several feet of drifted snow. "From then until Christmas," one cattleman remembered, "was a succession of bad storms. The range cattle were dying in December."[88] Christmas brought no relief from the blizzards and below-zero temperatures. The Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture recorded storms in the southwest on or about January 1, 2, 3, 4, 7-10, 11, 20, 21, and 23-25.[89] As snow piled up in the valleys and coulees the cattle were unable to feed themselves. The weak rapidly died off. Except for a few the linemen were able to round up and keep in sheltered spots, the cattle simply drifted along ahead of the incessant winds, away from the little feed that was available at the ranches and camps. The hoped-for chinook arrived late in January, but instead of clearing the range it added to the damage. One day the snow was beginning to melt: the next,

> the snow that had thawed mushy was frozen hard again, the prairie was sheathed in four inches of solid ice, and cattle that had lain down in the snow were frozen in, unable to move.[90]

The cold weather and storms continued unabated through February and into March. Late in that month a mild spell finally appeared, only to be followed by yet another series of blizzards in May which decimated the surviving cattle and took a high toll of newly borne calves.[91] Finally, in June, spring arrived.

Wallace Stegner has called the spring of 1907 a "Carrion Spring." As the snow melted thousands of carcasses were uncovered. Harry Otterson called his trip from Eastend to Stone Pile at the end of March "a gruesome ride. The cattle were in all stages of starvation. Many brush thickets were literally piled with dead cattle."[92] After the severe spring flooding on the Frenchman, dead cattle were found hanging in trees and stacked three deep in the coulees along the valley.[93] Nor were things any better to the north. In spring the remains of the Turkey Track herd "were found scattered for miles across the plains" between Notukeu Creek and Wood Mountain. As George Douglas put it, "A Thousand Head were dead around 12 Mile Lake. And dead cattle were in every Coulee clear to the western end of the range."[94] Thanks to their near-total reliance on the ability of the cattle to feed themselves, and the large numbers of imported cattle in their herds, the large ranches suffered the greatest losses, both proportionately and in absolute numbers. During the spring roundup the T-Bar Down cowhands were able to find only 2,500 of their 10,000 head, and those of the Turkey Track came up with only 1,000 of the cattle left on the Wood Mountain Uplands for the winter, putting their total losses in the region of 12,000 - 16,000 head. Altogether, the large ranches operating in the park area lost between 60 per cent and 70 per cent of their cattle,[95] and those that survived were in very poor condition. To make matters worse - if this was possible - many southwestern ranchers dumped their remaining stock on an already-depressed beef market, causing prices to plummet to $16 to $20 a head for cows with calves.[96]

These disastrous losses all but killed large-scale ranching in the park area. Certainly it was never the same again. Most of the 1907 owners were deeply in debt as a result of their purchase of large numbers of feeder cattle to expand their herds,[97] and had not either the credit or the will to continue in business. Within three years, the Turkey Track and the T-Bar Down had both shut down operations (as had their American counterparts the Circle Diamond and N-N).[98] The small ranchers, however, did not fare quite as badly. Many of them were specializing in horses, which, due to their better foraging techniques, survived the winter in fine shape.[100] Those who had cattle were generally able to take much better care of their smaller herds of range-acclimatized stock. Many had enough feed stored to keep their animals alive, at least, through the winter, and most were able to keep them under control near food, water and shelter.[101] Few lost more than half their stock, and many came through with only a handful of fatalities.[102] Even the "large" small ranchers like Bonneau and the Z-X had fewer losses than the large outfits.[103] While simply living through the winter was an ordeal in itself, and the price collapse caused financial problems, the small ranchers at least came out with a better-than-even chance of recovery. This recovery, however, would have to be geared to a radical change in conditions.

The winter of 1906-7 demonstrated the dangers of carrying a good thing too far. As the success of the small ranchers before and after this date showed, the park area was good ranching country. It was not, however, all good ranching country, nor was it always good ranching country. The natural resources necessary for the purpose - grass and water - were sufficiently plentiful to support stock-raising in most districts if intelligently and selectively exploited, and if due allowance was made for the inevitable fluctuations of the semi-arid climate. The small ranchers adapted themselves well to these conditions; the large ones, for the most part, did not. They exploited the marginal resources of the area to the limit during the good years and, when the slim margin of prosperity disappeared, paid for overstocking with three-quarters of their herds. The American cattlemen who ran these ranches were some of the most experienced in the world. The northern plains held no mysteries for them, and they had 20 years of experience by local small ranchers to draw upon. Why, then, did this happen? The answer, of course, is that they gambled that gains would outweigh losses in the long run. As it happened, they did not fully appreciate how devastating their short-term losses could be. They were neither the first nor the last to take such a gamble. Others were to discover tht the resources of the park area were not ones which could be indiscriminately exploited for any length of time, without due retribution being exacted sooner or later.

On the Defensive 1908-27

The third period in the development of ranching in the park area lasted from 1908 to the mid-1920s. It was a time of retreat and readjustment. The collapse of the open-range cattle companies created a vacuum, which was filled by small ranchers and by a "cattle conglomerate"; the famous "76," under new management. These developments, however, took place under the shadow of agricultural settlement, which began to move down from the north after the area was surveyed and opened to homesteaders in 1908. The ranchers retreated to the south and west and reorganized their operations, turning to leases and fenced range to protect their grazing rights. These measures, and others, were not particularly successful. The economic and political conditions of the time gave every advantage to farmers. By the 1920s, ranchers were hard put simply to survive. Many did not. While the industry survived an Act of God in 1906-7, it was very nearly exterminated by an Act of Parliament in 1908.

The item in question was "An Act to consolidate and amend the Acts respecting the Public Lands of the Dominion," better known as the Dominion Lands or Homestead Act of 1908.[104] The amendments embodied in this act were specifically directed at the semi-arid zone of Saskatchewan and Alberta. Provision was made to allow settlers 320 acres of free and cheap land each, instead of the 160 acres allowed for since 1889. This was done to encourage settlement in dry regions of the West, where a quarter-section was deemed entirely inadequate for a farm. In the previous year, subdivision surveys were begun in the park area to accommodate the anticipated flood of new settlers. The details of the survey and the background of the act have been dealt with at length separately (Ch. 7). For park area ranchers, they brought about a very dangerous type of competition.

The crux of the problem was the fact that farming (with improved dryland agricultural techniques) promised a higher return per acre of land than stock-raising in the dry southwest and, to begin with, lived up to this promise. In practice, this meant that a dozen or so farmers could make a living for themselves on the same acreage that one rancher might require to maintain a medium-sized herd. And 12 would-be farmers wielded a dozen votes to the rancher's one. Once homesteaders began to arrive in this area in substantial numbers, the rancher had two alternative means of securing an adequate amount of pasture.

The first was to buy the necessary land outright. Even assuming that the rancher had the wherewithal to do so, however, (an unlikely situation) this did not mean that he could. Under the Dominion Lands disposal system in effect in this area, 128 out of every 144 quarter-sections in the average township were reserved for homesteads and pre-emption entries, at a maximum of 320 acres to a customer. Even by paying premium rates for School and Hudson's Bay Company land (four sections per township), the largest contiguous block that could be purchased was a section (640 acres). The second alternative, which most ranchers took, was to lease grazing land from the Dominion. While less expensive, this method also had its drawbacks. The land involved had to be officially classified as unfit for agriculture. Until 1914, however, most leases had a clause which allowed the government to cancel them at two years' notice. Should enough homesteaders decide that the land on a lease could be farmed - and convince the Lands Branch inspector that this was the case - the rancher might find himself without a range. After 1914, a ten-year guarantee of security was given but a similar reassessment could take place when the lease came up for renewal in the mid-1920s.

The Dominion Government's land disposal system, and its settlement policy generally, were markedly biased in favour of the agricultural settler. The rationale for this was economic rather than environmental. Ranching required more land than farming to turn out an equivalent value of produce, and therefore it was 'obviously' a less efficient form of land use. The same bias was built into the local level of government. As soom as enough settlers moved into a district, a municipal government could be formed and incorporated. Due to the different land requirements for agriculture, there were almost always more farmer- than rancher-ratepayers. As a result, when it came to deciding whether crops or livestock should be fenced in the latter choice was invariably selected.[105] This meant that the cost of fencing had to be borne by the ranchers alone, and that any damage to crops by strays was their responsibility. Municipal taxation was also a problem. Since it was based on the estimated value of deeded land, the rancher could find himself paying rates which bore little relationship to the real value of the range in his operation. In all, rising land values and a farm-oriented form of local government forced ranchers to increase their capital investment to a point where it equalled or surpassed the value of their livestock.[106] This was the background of ranching development in the park area during the second decade of the century.

The large cattle companies in the park area began to close down very soon after the disastrous winter of 1906-7. In 1907 Tony Day's Turkey Track was sold to a syndicate which, for a short time, tried to keep the ranch going. The northern Turkey Track range, however, was the first part of the area to be entered by homesteaders, and the syndicate gave up in 1910 - selling its stock to the "76."[107] Similarly, the Bloom Land and Cattle Company's T-Bar Down struggled on for a few years, but its cattle were finally sold to the "76," also in 1910.[108] The firm which absorbed both of these ranches was Gordon, Ironsides and Fares of Winnipeg, a meat-packing company. It had first moved into the livestock business in 1909, with the purchase of the Canadian Land and Ranch Company's "76." This operation had lost the greater part of its huge herd in 1906-7. By 1910 Gordon, Ironsides and Fares controlled the remnants of all the large open-range cattle companies in the southwest.[109] Although they continued to operate in much the same fashion as their predecessors (as long as this was possible), Gordon, Ironsides and Fares was a different kind of large cattle company. Today, they would be called a vertical conglomerate, being involved in beef production all the way from the range to the consumer. Due to this diversification, their financial underpinnings were much more sound than those of the ordinary cattle company, the capital of which was fully tied up in its vulnerable herd. Gordon, Ironsides and Fares virtually provided their own market for their ranches' products. The fact that they also went out of business within a decade was indicative of the serious problems faced by the ranching industry as a whole in this period.

When the Turkey Track, the T-Bar Down and Circle Diamond ceased to operate in the Frenchman valley they put a number of cattlemen out of work and left a good deal of range unused. Since the operations of "76" after 1910 were never of the same size or scope as those of the earlier companies, the result was that many small ranchers moved into the lower valley area. One of these was Bill Huff, formerly the manager of the Z-X. In 1907 Huff purchased the Turkey Track's line camp at Seventy Mile and went into business for himself, grazing his stock on the plain between the Crossing and Pinto Butte. By 1911 he had at least 500 horses and 800 cattle, and took out a township-sized lease (25,273 acres) north towards Cadillac. His ranch was one of the most successful operations in the area, lasting until 1940 when it was taken up by the P.F.R.A.[110] At about the same time, J.H. Kyle and his brother William set up small ranches near the Crossing, and by 1912-13 had more than 100 horses and 700 cattle running on more than 17,000 acres of leased land between the river and Cadillac.[111] A number of smaller operations also began to appear. C.H. McGuire worked out of a ranch near Huff's, having leased 2,560 acres for 50-odd horses and 100 cattle in 1911. In the Snake (later Denniel) Creek area, C.E. Prescott and J.L. Denniel had small leases, and further to the southeast John Trottier, the three Martin Brothers, James W. Wilson, J.E. Very and C.J. Thompson all had ranches. Most of these were probably started in 1907-10, and all took out leases in 1912-14.[112] Many were Americans, and several were local "characters." William Buzzard, who ranched on the lower Frenchman, was both. P.S. Long later described him as "a short man with a moustache, which was turning grey when I first met him. He ran about five or six hundred head of cattle and lived as a bachelor on his small ranch for years," until his semi-retirement in the early 1920s.[113]

Although these small ranchers dominated the scene along the lower Frenchman during this period, they were not the only ones using the range. One particularly interesting operation was that of the Z-X, just outside of the park area upriver from Stone Pile. After surviving the winter of 1906-7, Enright and Strong's small cattle company undertook a unique venture. Being in good financial shape, the obvious step for them would have been to expand their herd. Instead, they used their capital to diversify. In about 1907,

> The Company made application for the valley lands under the irrigation Act ... and proceeded with the construction of a large dam in the White Mud River, also large canals and ditches to distribute the water and fenced one township of land for grazing. They employed an army of men for a number of years.[114]

In 1908 Dominion Land Surveyor C.F. Miles noted that, "they appeared to have excellent crops of wheat, barley and vegetables. I understand several hundred thousand dollars had been expended in irrigation."[115] This project was still going strong in 1917, but soon thereafter disaster struck, and "The dam was destroyed by the spring flood, and was never rebuilt."[116] The Z-X appears to have been using its irrigated valley land to grow winter feed for its cattle, which were pastured on the surrounding plains during the summer. This was exactly the pattern which proved successful 30 years later, when the Val Marie Irrigation Project was instituted by the P.F.R.A. to restore stock-raising in the lower valley (*see* below). In 1907, however, it must have seemed a radical step, and Enright and Strong deserve to be remembered for their foresight, and for their imagination.

The "76" ranch operation, on the other hand, was altogether conventional. For several years they simply continued to use the open range. Then, about 1914, they acquired four huge leases between Seventy Mile and Eastend, their home ranch for the Frenchman area being at Fifty Mile Crossing. These leases were fully fenced. The only one wholly in the park area was "Sand Lake Field," which occupied about 80,000 acres (around three townships) between Sand Lake (2-14 W3) and the Frenchman River, and included both sheltered winter pasture in the river valley and summer range on both sides. It appears that a resident rancher was bought out when the lease was secured, but the new owners did not establish a permanent ranch until after the First World War.[117]

The large and small ranchers mentioned above did not take out leases with such alacrity simply because the government told them to. Their reasons were more concrete, for ranchers were not the only ones moving into the area at this time. As Phillip Long notes,

> Even before the C.P.R. built the line through Shaunovan [1916] there were farmers to the south who had to haul their grain to the main line ... a haul of eighty or ninety miles for some ... [requiring] a week or ten days with one load.[118]

Many of these were in the Seventy Mile Crossing area, the first homesteaders having arrived about 1910. By 1913 all of the good homesteads had been taken up around and to the southeast of the Crossing. Settlements sprang up at Gergovia (3-11 W3), Reliance (4-11 W3), Coriander (4-12 W3), and Hillandale (5-13 W3), among others, and settlers began to push into the area south of the Frenchman along the border.[119] In 1910 C.F. Miles suggested that "a tier of say four or five townships north from the international boundary should be reserved for grazing purposes"[120] but by 1917, as G.C. Cowper noted, "the valley area was divided equally between homesteaded and leased land, except for the townships along the border west of the river" which, being "too hilly for farming ... are under grazing lease."[121] By 1920, with a railway 'only' 50 miles to the north and one soon to be built into the area, homesteaders had occupied the land right up to the fences of Sand Lake Field.[122] Although small ranching and farming developed side by side in the southwestern corner of the park area, there was little doubt on which side all the advantages were to be found.

Just as the ranchers in the valley were edged to the west by homesteaders, those around Wood Mountain were pushed to the south. The pattern of development at Wood Mountain after 1907 was, for the first time, very similar to that further west. In the period 1907-11 several new ranches appeared, and leases were taken out to secure pasture rights. Many ranchers converted to, or started with horses rather than cattle. This may have been because there was less room to expand in the Wood Mountain area, due to the number of ranches already established and because there was less acreage suitable for growing feed than was available in the valley. Also, the market for horses was booming, ironically, to meet the demands of homesteaders for horsepower. In any case, Wood Mountain ranchers showed a strong preference for this type of stock at this time.[123]

Like Bill Huff, several of the new Wood Mountain ranchers were ex-cattle company employees. Fred Hausman, for example, once the foreman of the Turkey Track, started a horse ranch on the southern slopes of Wood Mountain in 1907 or 1908. His partner was also once a Turkey Track cowboy.[124] Most of the new arrivals, however, were Americans. The influx began in earnest in 1909,[125] and by 1913 there were a considerable number of new ranches in operation. The focus of activity was to the south and southwest of Wood Mountain post, around Sister and Lonesome buttes, where many located on Horse, McEachern and Rock creeks to be near running water. Mrs. Acquina Anderson has written a vivid and detailed description of ranching life in this period. Her family, and her husband's, came to Wood Mountain by train and wagon in 1911. Both were from the same area in South Dakota as the Offersons, and both settled along Rock Creek near the boundary.[126] New ranches such as the Wright's, Swanson's, Barstad's and Solverson's drove in horses from North Dakota and Montana and, because prices were in the neighbourhood of $300 to $600 for a good team, did fairly well.[127] But some, like the Andersons, stayed with cattle. Their grazing lease was on the border, in the vicinity of the East Block of the proposed park.[128] Being so far from the Canadian Pacific Railway, most of their and their neighbour's stock was shipped out to the south. This was a co-operative effort. Mrs. J.H. Stewart notes that, in 1912-13, "All of the settlers belonged to the Stock Shippers Association and stock to be sold by individual members would be collected in one spot and driven to Whitetail, Montana ... This long trek had to be taken very slowly to prevent great shrinkage of the stock."[129]

While the new ranchers were settling themselves in, the established ones were not idle. Sam Briggs acquired a 6,000-acre lease near the post, and ran about 350 horses on it,[130] while Dub Mayne and Max Hauser continued to ranch on the west end of the plateau.[131] William Ogle also continued to prosper. In 1908 he was the first person to enter for a homestead and pre-emption in the Wood Mountain township (4-3 W3) which had been subdivided in 1886. In the same year he leased 5,800 acres near the post, and soon after added 12,000 acres along the border around Rock Creek, next to the Anderson lease.[132] Line riders were hired for the latter to keep his horses and cattle from drifting into the United States.[133] Ogle specialized in horses, some of which were sold "on time" to local farmers, and others driven to Moose Jaw for sale. In time, his herds were too large for his own range, and were 'subcontracted' to other ranchers such as Edward McPherson and George Hollenbach.[134] "Lord" Ogle, however, was not always preoccupied with his own ranch. He is well remembered for his leadership in the ranching community. With Briggs, he founded a Turf Club, which still survives today in the form of the annual Wood Mountain

Stampede.[135] Ogle was also active in the organization of the Saskatchewan Stock Growers' Association (see below), and in general served as a spokesman for local ranching. As one veteran cattleman put it, "... he could meet the high mucky mucks. He knew and was well known to the high officials as he had a good education and could speak their language."[136]

As was the case in the Frenchman River valley, new growth and expansion in the ranching industry around Wood Mountain went hand in hand with agricultural development. No sooner had the area been opened up than settlers began to move into the Wood River district in large numbers. By 1913 most of the area along and north of the Wood Mountain-Pinto Butte watershed had been taken up.[137] A pocket of homesteaders also appeared along the valley of the West Poplar River but, being made up mainly of young British bachelors, this swiftly disappeared after August, 1914.[138] Overall, the ranchers were beginning to find themselves hemmed in on every side. In 1915 the North West Mounted Police reported that all the best farming land in the district had been taken up, concluding,

> The Wood Mountain district, until five years ago, devoted almost entirely to ranching, is rapidly becoming a farming country. The rancher, unless he has leased land, can now find no range for his stock.[139]

Apparently farmers were also encroaching onto marginal lands, ones which were obviously fit only for pasture.[140] The start of the War in 1914 momentarily put a damper on agricultural expansion, but the phenomenal crops of 1915, the sharp rise in grain prices and demand at the same time, and the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway line from Assiniboia to Shaunavon in 1916, soon gave it new impetus (see below). For ranchers, though, increased prices for livestock were offset by rising costs; particularly during the dry years of 1917-19 when feed had to be imported from the east. And, by the overseas market.[141] When William Ogle returned from military service he did not find conditions to his liking. In his reminiscences he wrote,

> I ... rode to the top of the highest butte I could find and looked over the country, everywhere I looked I could see houses and ploughed land, so I said to myself the West has passed and you better pass with it, so I sold my horses and cattle - over 1,000 horses and 650 cattle.[142]

If the future of park area ranchers was none too bright in this period, they were at least going down fighting, although, happily for all concerned, the weapons were words rather than more drastic implements. When the park area was opened to homesteading in 1908 ranchers lost no time in buttonholing officials of the Provincial Department of Agriculture. In the department's annual report for 1909 it was noted that,

> the ranchers complained bitterly of the encroachments of the homesteaders, the resulting introduction of herd laws, and the curtailment of range and water priviledges. Many of them assert that a well-established and long-tried industry is being destroyed for the sake of a precarious one - as they consider farming in the semi-arid southwestern portion of the province.[143]

In essence they were repeating the long-standing argument of western ranchers that the semi-arid zone was a 'special region' requiring specialized use, and that the policy of the federal government in encouraging agriculture was both morally wrong and potentially disastrous.[144] The argument was no less valid for being unoriginal. In time, the complaints led the Dominion Government to look into the problem. In 1912 a Ranching and Grazing Investigation Commission was established to determine the status of the ranching industry in the West, with particular emphasis on the problem of security of tenure. Its recommendations were far reaching. The commission suggested that the twenty-one-year lease with the two-year termination clause (the "open" lease) be abolished and replaced with ten-year "closed" leases. A minimum number of animals to be grazed (one per thirty acres), and the maximum size of individual leases (24,000 acres - later halved), were set. Also, provision was made for disappointed homesteaders to 'trade in' their land for a new entry elsewhere, with the abandoned claim to be leased for ranching, and for preference to be given to ranchers willing to feed their stock in winter. These measures were to be applied only in areas south of a line drawn by the commission (Map 10), but it was recommended that all vacant Dominion lands in this area should be set apart exclusively for leasing.[145]

These suggestions were implemented in February of 1914: or, at least, some of them were. During the year, or shortly after, it appears that most ranchers converted their existing twenty-one year leases to ten-year ones, and a great many new leases were taken out in the reserved area.[146] The homestead abandonment provision, however, does not seem to have been enacted until 1923.[147] Nor does the closure of vacant Dominion lands in the 'reserved' areas seem to have lasted very long (*see* below). It may be that this was ended when the preemption and purchased-homestead provisions of the 1908 act were repealed in 1918:[148] perhaps on the principle that quarter-section homesteads would not induce settlers to go into the semi-arid zone, and that with closed leases in effect, they did not pose a threat to ranching. In any case, the commission's sweeping designation of whole districts as "clearly unfit for homestead settlement or sale" was soon cut back in favour of the old practice of selective examination. While the 1913 commission was clearly a step in the right direction, and while the closed leases which followed from it were clearly preferable to open ones, on the whole the investigators promised more than the government was willing or able to deliver.

Commission was a federal affair and, as such, could do nothing about the problem which immediately concerned ranchers in southwestern Saskatchewan. This was the vexing question of municipal pound and herd laws, open road allowances, and taxation policies which discriminated against ranchers. In a nutshell, ranchers objected to the fact that a handful of homesteaders in their district could force them to fence their range, then force them to pay fines to release impounded stray livestock which may have wandered in the first place because someone using the municipal road allowances left the gate open. As the *Saskatchewan Farmer* (oddly enough) put it, in 1914,

> Fancy two or three homesteaders making entry in the middle of what was a leased township and cropping ten or twenty acres - all the level land on their homesteads - and then getting the herd law in force in that township.[149]

To add insult to injury, municipalities taxed leased acreage at the same rate as deeded farm land. By 1912 it had become evident that the Western Stock Growers Association, a regional body, could not help its Saskatchewan members with this. Agitation began for a provincial association capable of dealing directly with the provincial government. This movement was led by Wood Mountain and Willow Bunch ranchers, including William Ogle.[150]

These men stated their position in no uncertain terms. In a circular letter sent out in 1913, ranchers were warned that if they did not organize "the ranching industry in the West will early become a thing of the past," and were invited to form a new organization aimed at "fostering, and if at all possible ... re-establishing the oldest established industry in the Western Country."[151] At a constitutional convention held at Moose Jaw in the same year, William Ogle was elected the first president of the new Saskatchewan Stock Growers' Association. District association directors in the park area were J.B. Thompson for Elm Springs, Fred Hausman for Coriander, and George Hollenbach and Sam Briggs for Wood Mountain. The first resolution passed dealt entirely with putting pressure on the provincial government ("... take action by way of passing legislation") to have the unfavourable municipal regulations altered, and in 1914 an enlarged organization fully endorsed this plan of action.[152]

The new association justified its existence in short order. Its lobbying in Regina produced two consecutive Commissions of Inquiry into ranching, in 1914 and 1915. The first of these recommended sweeping changes in herd and pound laws, and changes in road allowance and gate regulations, which were implemented in 1917.[153] The second influenced the passage, in 1916, of a measure changing the maximum annual tax rate on leased land to $2 an acre, and recommended government action on a number of other measures favouring ranchers.[154] It is probably fair to say that these steps, initiated by the Saskatchewan Stock Growers' Association, saved the ranching industry in Saskatchewan from complete disruption. While the clock could not be turned back, it was shown that immediate problems could be solved by united action. Also, the preoccupation of the government with agriculture was broken. The precedent established in 1914-17 ensured that ranching's future complaints would at least receive a hearing, an important point when Dominion lands reverted to the province after 1930, and during the Depression. It may also be that the association's political power favourably affected the rancher's dealings with Ottawa. When grazing leases came up for renewal in the mid-1920s, the Saskatchewan and Alberta Stock Growers' associations were able not only to ensure renewal (in most cases), but also to have twenty-one-year closed leases issued.[155] No action on the part of the Saskatchewan association could rid the semi-arid southwest of homesteaders, but it could at least help ranchers make the best of a bad bargain.

By the end of the First World War ranching in the park area had largely retreated into the rough sections of the Wood Mountain Uplands, the badlands, and the river valleys, with one major exception. Gordon, Ironsides and Fares had managed to retain the Sand Lake Field as a fenced range for part of its 12,000-head cattle herd, having taken out a ten-year closed lease on the block in 1917.[156] This lease was probably the largest unsettled piece of land in the park area at this time, and was certainly the best of the remaining range. The company,

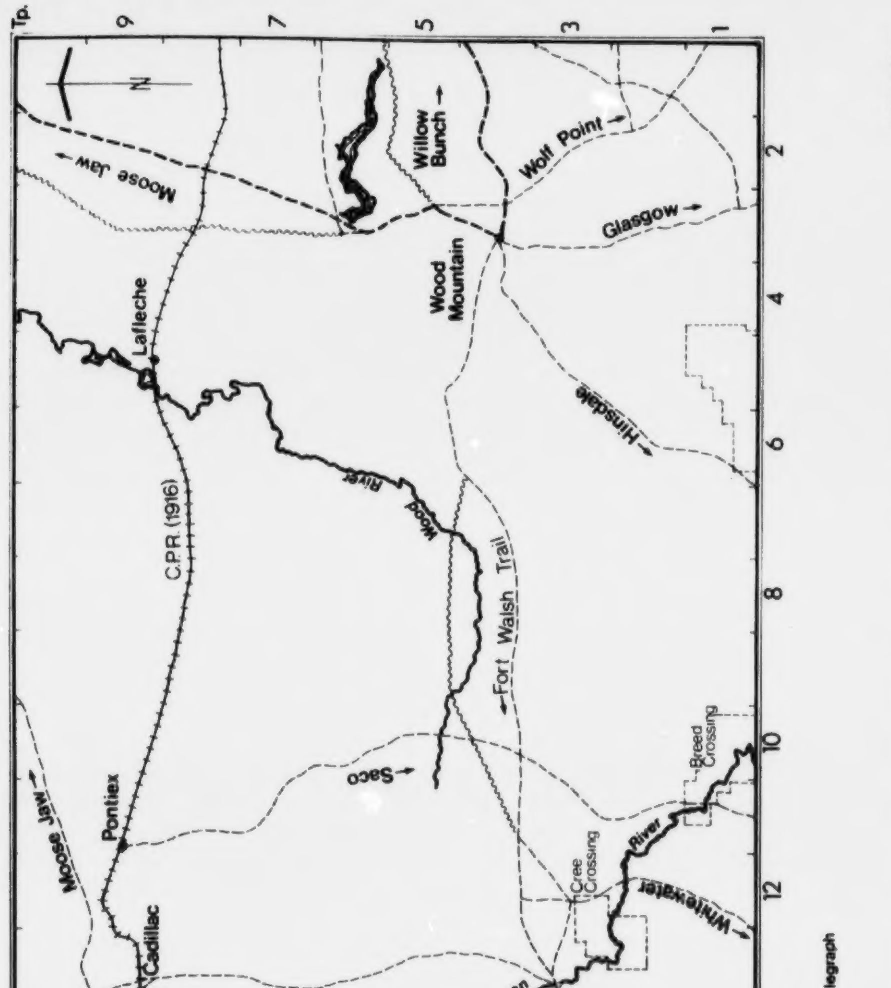

Tp.
9
7
5
3
1
N
Moose Jaw
Willow Bunch
Wolf Point
Glasgow
Wood Mountain
Lafleche
C.P.R. (1916)
Wood River
Hinsdale
Fort Walsh Trail
Saco
Pontiex
Moose Jaw
Cadillac
Cree Crossing
Breed Crossing
River
Whitewater
Swift Current
Frenchman
Malta
Rge.
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
Rail line
Trail and Telegraph
Trail
Old trail
1/2" = 6mi.

FIG. 12 Trails and Communications in the Park Area, ca. 1920

however, was having problems with its ranching and meat-packing combination. A mange epidemic during the war had necessitated the construction of a large dipping-vat at Sand Lake, and during the severe winter of 1918-19 it was necessary to import feed to keep part of the herd alive.[157] Ranching costs were rising, in other words, even as beef prices fell. While the ranch itself remained more or less viable, the meat-packing plant at Moose Jaw did not. As a result, in 1920, Gordon, Ironsides and Fares sold their meat business to Swift, and the better part of the "76" ranch to Burns. However, they could not agree with the latter on a price for the Sand Lake Field.[158]

Being so far from the existing rail lines, it was thought that the Sand Lake Field would be one of the last major leases to be opened for homesteading. If it were not used, of course, (adhering to the minimum stock clause of the lease) this would happen immediately. T.B. Long, however, came up with an alternative. In 1920 he was able to persuade one of the former owners, Fares, to provide the necessary capital as the silent partner in a horse ranch. Long, formerly the manager of the entire "76" (1917-20), a veteran American cattleman, was to provide the breeding stock and the expertise for the new Seventy Mile Ranch.[159]

The new operation seemed quite feasible. The lease as a whole was self-contained. It had an adequate amount of good summer range, and the section in and north of the river valley itself provided a winter range from which stock could easily be excluded during the rest of the year. Also, it already had a boundary fence (although an internal dividing fence was added to make the range more manageable), was conveniently located on trails,[160] and had enough farms nearby to provide a local market for its animals. Long and his family moved onto the lease in the spring of 1921. They brought with them a small cattle herd, a larger horse herd, and 60 thoroughbred "Kentucky Whip" saddle mares as breeding stock. In addition, horses and cattle were taken into pasture from Alberta and other parts of Saskatchewan.[161] Aside from some minor problems with one or two neighbours, and the usual tribulations with gates, the ranch did well. By 1923 Long had 3,000 horses and 800 cattle on the range[162] but no sooner had he established himself than it became obvious that the end of the ranch was in sight.

In part, the Seventy Mile Ranch was both the product and the victim of coincidence. Had there been a rail line in the area in 1920 it is unlikely that it would have been started. A Canadian National Railway route had in fact been surveyed earlier, but had not been built due to the War.[163] Long, therefore, went ahead with his plan. The expiration of his ten-year lease in 1926, however, unfortunately coincided with the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway line to the new town of Val Marie in 1924. As Phillip Long put it,

> with the coming of the railroad it was almost certain that the government would throw open its leased land to the Homestead Act.[164]

The new line actually cut through the western portion of the lease, making that part of the range unusable. But this was a minor detail. In the spring of 1926 any lingering uncertainty vanished when the Dominion Government decided not to renew the Seventy Mile lease. It was not the only one to be so treated. Due to several good wheat crops in the early 1920s, a number of the larger leases were reclassified when they came up for renewal. Some ranchers, facing this, "short-sightedly grazed their leases into the ground to make it appear that the lands were unsuitable for cultivation."[165] The Longs did not resort to such drastic measures. Their spring roundup in 1926, in which 3,500 horses were collected, was the last.[166] When Phillip Long went into Val Marie that spring he found a two-block lineup of men at the Land Office waiting to file for homesteads on the defunct lease. "I could not help but wonder," he later wrote, "how many of them would be disappointed and watch their dreams dry up and blow away across the rolling prairie. I had ridden every foot of that land and I knew that much of it was ... totally unsuited to farming."[167] The Long family departed for Montana, and a new ranch.

With the voluntary departure of William Ogle from the Wood Mountain district, and the expulsion of T.B. Long from the Frenchman valley, the struggle to maintain the old form of ranching in the park area ended in defeat. These two men personified the two different traditions of ranching which had contributed to the development of the area: on the one hand, British-oriented small ranching on the Wood Mountain plateau, on the other, American-oriented large cattle company operations on the Frenchman River plain. By the mid-1920s, however, the distinction between the two had blurred. After 1908 ranchers tried every expedient available to them - from political manoeuvering to outright retreat - in their attempt to survive the deluge of homesteaders. Ogle and Long, with their large leases and horse-dominated operations, represented one final effort to maintain the old independence while adapting to new conditions. It proved to be unsuccessful. As long as enough new settlers, and enough government officials, believed the semi-arid grasslands to be a farmer's paradise, ranching in the park area could not hope to regain its former station.

From Ranching to Cattle Farming 1927-70s

In a newspaper article on the history of ranching at Wood Mountain written in 1932, George Douglas noted that, since the arrival of the homesteaders, ranching

> has gradually become more of a farming proposition, with fenced range, winter feeding, [a] better class of animals and better care ... the days of the big herds are gone, but the days of well managed small herds are coming.[168]

Douglas' comment was a disservice to the many small ranchers who had built up the industry in the district, but both his observation and his prediction were essentially correct. Since the 1920s ranching and farming in the park area have gradually drifted closer and closer together. Today, the difference between a "ranch" and a "farm" is often one of emphasis only. The one grows cattle and wheat, the other wheat and cattle.

While diversification was in evidence in the southwest during the 1920s, when low prices made it unwise to rely exclusively on one product,[169] the crucial period in its development was the 1930s. Ranchers had learned in 1906-7 that indiscriminate exploitation of the natural resources of the park area was an open invitation to disaster. They attempted, time and again, to impress this point on homesteaders bent on ploughing up every flat acre in sight, regardless of quality, and on the government(s) which permitted and encouraged them to do so. Their warnings, for the most part, were ignored. Chronic drought and grasshopper plagues, in the 1930s constituted a much more convincing argument that the semi-arid zone was a 'special region'. The drought years showed that over-specialization and imprudent resource use - by farmers or ranchers - did not lend itself to survival.

The 1930s have been dealt with at length elsewhere in this study (Ch. 12). It was as difficult a time for ranchers as it was for everyone else. The main problem in the park area was the lack of feed and fodder. At times the range was so dry that three head of cattle could barely subsist on a quarter-section.[170] The government helped by sending in some feed, and by taking out stock to winter elsewhere, but in the end it was necessary to reduce the amount of livestock in the area to an absolute minimum. In 1937 alone 2,000 head, purchased by the provincial government, were shipped out of Mankota, and only 150 head of cattle were left in the whole of the Val Marie district by the end of the year.[171] Some help was also given with lease and tax payments. The provincial government, which had taken over grazing lands administration in 1930, allowed a 50 per cent reduction in lease arrears in 1937, and reduced the rates themselves by half between 1937 and 1940. Also in 1937, about 70 per cent of municipal tax arrears were simply written off.[172] These measures, of course, were only stopgaps.

By 1937 ranching and farming alike had come to a complete halt in the park area: or as near to one as not to make a great deal of difference. Measures designed to get them going again, however, were in progress. Of particular importance were the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act (P.F.R.A.) of 1935, which led to irrigation projects such as that at Val Marie, and the 1937 Land Utilization provision, which led to the creation of the Community Pasture system. The first turned dryland farmers into part-time stock growers.

Work on the P.F.R.A.'s Val Marie Irrigation Project was started in 1935, and by 1938 some 4,600 acres of valley land had been brought into it. The irrigation system was built by local farmers using their own equipment, with the P.F.R.A. providing materials, wages and technical direction. Those who had previously lived on the land involved, sold their farms to the project and were then given 80 to 120 acres of improved land. Other local farmers were allowed to trade their homesteads for similar plots, the old farms being incorporated into Community Pastures. Other farmers simply sold their land outright to the government for pasture use, and left. The purpose of the irrigation project was not to create self-contained farms, but to provide a reliable source of seed and fodder. Its farmers were required to grow alfalfa on ten acres of their irrigated land. They were then encouraged to raise livestock, using this as winter feed for cattle grazed in the local Community Pasture. This facet of the project was successful for, by 1952, the average participating farmer had more than 65 head of livestock.[173] While the Val Marie project was the largest, and was later expanded by the West Val Marie project it was not the only P.F.R.A. water control work in the park area. Smaller projects were undertaken on the Wood River near Gravelbourg, at Twelve Mile Lake, and at other locations. In addition, hundreds of farm dugouts and small stock-watering dams were built with the administration's assistance.[174] Taken together, the latter probably had as great, if not a greater impact on the area than large developments.

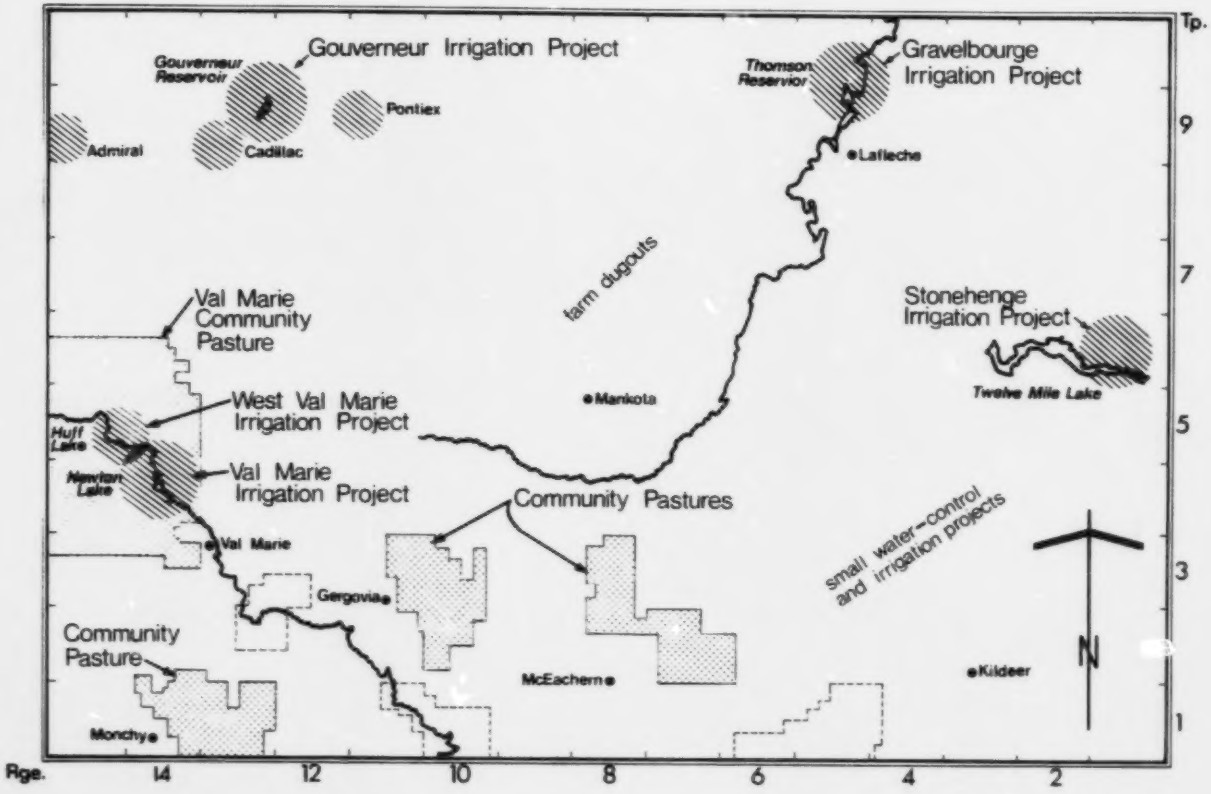

Tp.
Gouverneur Irrigation Project
Gouverneur Reservoir
Pontiex
Admiral
Cadillac
Thomson Reservior
Gravelbourge Irrigation Project
Lafleche
farm dugouts
Val Marie Community Pasture
Stonehenge Irrigation Project
Twelve Mile Lake
Mankota
West Val Marie Irrigation Project
Huff Lake
Newton Lake
Val Marie Irrigation Project
Community Pastures
small water-control and irrigation projects
Val Marie
Gergovia
Community Pasture
McEachern
Kildeer
Monchy
N
9
7
5
3
1
Rge.
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
1/2" = 1 mi.

FIG. 13 P.F.R.A. Projects in the Park Area

Like the various water control projects, the P.F.R.A.'s Community Pasture program was designed to supplement local endeavors, rather than to create self-contained farm or ranch units. Specifically, they were meant to provide a permanent reserve of grass in case of drought. The pastures were created by acquiring derelict farms, over-grazed leased range and other available land, and "regrassing" them. That around Val Marie, for example, encompassed 155,680 acres, including the former lease of the Huff Ranch.[175] Three others, of about 9,000 - 10,000 acres each, were assembled near Monchy, Gergovia and McEachern, and smaller ones were situated south of Twelve Mile Lake.[176] Each marked the site of a serious mistake in the settlement policy of the Dominion Government. The pastures were, and are, administered by P.F.R.A. managers and a local committee, with nominal monthly fees being charged for each head of stock released on it, and for other services. These arrangements enabled farmers to become involved in stock-raising without having to make a major capital investment in extra land but established ranchers also benefited.

The pastures provided them with cheap alternative range, and with insurance against drought. This allowed them both to conserve their own grazing land, and to use more of their leased and deeded land for the production of feed. In combination with the irrigation projects, the Community Pastures were instrumental in promoting diversification in the park area.[177]

The stock-raising industry in the park area recovered rapidly after 1937. The chief characteristic of the modern industry is its diffusion. Cattle are no longer confined to "ranches." By 1951 some 65 per cent of all the farms in the area were reported to have cattle, the average being 17 head.[178] There are two distinct components in the new pattern. In the relatively fertile northern half of the park area, many wheat farmers seem to have waited out the drought and depression (Ch. 12). In the reconstruction period, they largely returned to wheat farming. At the same time, however, many also began to raise dairy and butcher cattle using their surplus grain. While not a major part of their operation, cattle nonetheless provide a useful source of supplementary income.

As the distribution of community pastures suggests, the pattern of development was somewhat different in the south and southwest. Many of the later-settled lands south of the plateau were of a decidedly marginal nature for grain production. As a result, wholesale abandonment took place in the 1930s.[179] Bruce Peel recorded in 1944 that "In township one, range seven, there were nearly fifty sets of farm buildings [in the 1930s]; today there are only the corrals and barns of two ranches".[180] Such abandonments provided room for new development in the south. The mixture varies in this area with soil and terrain, but cattle production is generally emphasized. Where wheat is grown it is as a "chance cash crop," one which can be sold or used for feed as conditions warrant. Without exception, livestock are fed for at least part of the winter, three months for mature stock being normal. Reserves of a ton or more of hay per head are generally considered necessary for this purpose, and up to one-quarter of the land on a ranch is ordinarily devoted to feed production. The remainder, used for summer range, is largely natural grassland, although the proportion of improved, reseeded pasture is growing. Range conservation is facilitated by the division of the land into a number of different pastures, with about one-third being protected for winter use, and the balance being subdivided by a network of fences to prevent overgrazing.[181] These improved range management practices, together with diversification, have given park area ranching an element of stability which has been lacking since 1908, or, for that matter, since cattle were first introduced. Lease security, arising from a government, more rational towards land use, has also contributed to this, as has a more even distribution of ranch capital between stock, and land, equipment and buildings.[182] This relative economic stability, of course, has had its price.

It might be said that ranchers in the park area have been too successful for their own good. Throughout the settlement period they sought to convince farmers and senior levels of government alike that, as D.H. Breen puts it, in the long run the environment would tolerate "only those enterprises that were able to adapt to its uncompromising demands."[183] The validity of this argument was not realized until it was almost too late to remedy the situation. When it was, however, the solutions developed were not necessarily those envisaged by the ranchers. If they supposed that traditional ranching was the only enterprise that could so adapt, they were wrong. During the 1940s and 1950s farmers turned to improved dryland farming techniques (largely made possible by mechanization), and to diversification (largely made possible by massive government support), and proved that agriculture was also viable in the semi-arid zone on a long-term basis. This development, though, did not bring the long-standing competition between ranchers and farmers to an end. Rather, it appears to have changed the direction of the rivalry.

It is very difficult to generalize about the development of ranching in the park area since the 1950s: or, rather, it is easy to generalize, but difficult to do so with any confidence in the accuracy of the result. The decade following the Depression was one of recovery and reconstruction, attended by the diffusion of stock-growing, and relative economic stability for ranchers. It is evident, however, that stability has not meant stagnation. As it has in every period of its long history, the ranching industry continues to change in response to new conditions. If anything, the rate of change has increased in the last decade.

Outward appearances suggest that, sharing in the improved rural communications and the new agricultural technology, ranching and farming are growing even closer together. In other words, if ranching was beginning to be a "farming proposition" in the early 1930s, this trend is even more pronounced now. This raises the question of whether the Depression actually caused new developments, or whether it acted as an accelerator for changes which were already in progress. The chief ingredients of ranching's latter-day stability - irrigation works, co-operative marketing, small ranching based on winter feeding, and range conservation - had all been tried before 1930. What was new, after 1937, was the uniformity of their application. This was largely due to federal governmental intervention but the principal reason that this intervention was needed was the federal government's own settlement policies. V.C. Fowke, for example, has argued that the main thrust of P.F.R.A. work has in effect been towards the correction of the mistakes made in the homestead period.[184] Had ranching been left to develop at its own pace, it seems likely that it would eventually have reached the form it is in today, perhaps in a shorter time, and with less wear and tear. This, however, is idle speculation. One thing that is certain is that the ranching industry in the park area has proven to be a very flexible entity. Despite all of the threats to its existence over the past century it has continued to adapt and to survive. Ironically the proposed Grasslands National Park, meant to preserve a representative example of the natural grassland which is closely associated with ranching in the area, constitutes the latest threat to the industry. A number of ranches in the three "core areas" will be immediately affected, and more changes can be expected in the near future if the planned expansion to a single 300-square-mile park is carried out. In the authors' opinion, the success of the venture will largely depend on the government's ability to minimize the disruptive effects of the proposed park on local ranchers, and to take advantage of their knowledge of the area. It is just as important in 1978 to consult the real experts on the grasslands, as it should have been in 1908.

Summary

The history of ranching in the park area naturally has much in common with that of the industry in Alberta, the heartland of ranching in the Canadian West but it was not an exact copy of a smaller scale. Due to the area's isolation, and to the nature of its resources, it was one of the last to be opened up both to large-scale ranching and to agricultural settlement. Small ranching, which first appeared in the mid-1880s, was an indigenous development by Britains and English and French Candians, drawing heavily on American experience. It was well adapted to local needs - chiefly those of the North West Mounted Police - and to local resources - chiefly those of the Wood Mountain plateau. Protected by the lack of competition in the 1890s, small ranching put down deep roots. In the ensuing decade, however, this promising development was stunted.

In quick succession small ranchers had to cope with the competition of large corporate ranching and agricultural settlement - both, in their original forms, maladapted to the park area environment. The first was not as great a threat as the second and, when it was eliminated by weather and agriculture, small ranchers were able to move into the vacated districts south and west of Wood Mountain and along the lower Frenchman River. The second was more serious. The priorities of intensive agricultural land use were diametrically opposed to those of small ranching, and had powerful backing from all levels of government. Overnight, the "economy of plenty" of the open range was replaced by an "economy of scarcity." The result was a major disruption of small ranching. Ranchers tried to escape its effects by retreating into the barren south, and to adapt to the new conditions by taking out grazing leases to secure their grazing rights. Neither expedient was entirely successful. Homesteaders followed the ranchers into areas patently unsuitable for agriculture and contested the leases whenever possible. Finally, the ranchers organized themselves, and mounted a political counter-attack. This, combined with a gradual slowdown in new agricultural settlement, appears to have produced a relative equilibrium by the later 1920s.

Within a quarter-century of the opening of the park area to agricultural settlement, it became apparent to all concerned that a serious error had been made. Its initial victim, the small ranchers, had to pay the price a second time, during the 1930s. Ironically, the ensuing reconstruction followed the basic pattern of diversification delineated by these ranchers in the previous decades. They had taken this course of action in order to cope with the climate and the homesteaders. Farmers and governments turned to it in the late 1930s for much the same reason: to cope with the climate, and with the long-term effects of the homestead-oriented settlement policy in the semi-arid zone. It might be said, to paraphrase a great American philosopher (Pogo), that "They met the enemy, and they were it." It is doubtful if ranchers found much satisfaction in this.

Note on Sources

In addition to the secondary works cited in the text, three theses on Alberta ranching should be consulted. These include D.H. Breen's "The Canadian West and the Ranching Frontier, 1878-1921" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Alberta, 1972), and "The Cattle Compact: the ranch community in southern Alberta, 1881-1896" (M.A. thesis, University of Calgary, 1968), and L.G. Thomas' older but still-important work "The Ranching Period in Southern Alberta" (M.A. thesis, University of Alberta, 1935). For a very useful critical survey of the literature on western Canadian ranching see D.H. Breen, "The Ranching Frontier in the Prairie West: An Historiographical Comment" in University of Regina, Development of Agriculture on the Prairies: Proceedings of Seminar (Regina: 1975), 10 pp. (insert).

Further historical work on ranching in the park area must be based on a thorough examination of land tenure and grazing leases; which, unfortunately, could not be undertaken in the time available for this survey. This will require primary research in the grazing lease files of the Timber and Grazing Lands Division of the Dominion Lands Branch of the Department of the Interior. These are stored in the Public Archives of Canada in Ottawa (RG 15C2a, Vols. 1180-1295, 1874-1947). A quantitative, chronological study of the number and location of leases, as a test of the validity of the outline history given above, is recommended.

CHAPTER VII THE DOMINION LANDS ACT OF 1908

In the early 1920s a veteran Cypress Hills rancher added the following codicil to his last will and testament:

> I leave to each and every Mossback my perpetual curse, as some reward to them for their labours in destroying the Open Range, by means of that most pernicious of all implements, the plow.[1]

His sentiments were probably shared by fellow ranchers in the park area. If the progressive homesteaders of the period had believed in the efficacy of collective curses, few would have settled in the border country of southern Saskatchewan. But these gentlemen firmly believed, instead, in the powers of statute law. For them, the revised Dominion Lands Act of 1908 magically transformed these inhospitable lands into a garden of plenty.

The potential value of the semi-arid zone had been a matter for considerable debate between the late 1850s and the early 1880s (Ch. 5). To begin with, the "inner triangle" was condemned sight unseen as unfit for man or beast but later on closer examination, such opinions were not upheld. In the park area itself, two of the three proncipal assessors were more or less in agreement. G.M. Dawson and O.J. Klotz concluded that there was in fact some good land, and probably a good deal of it, but that the lack of moisture made agriculture a dubious proposition. At the time of writing, neither could see a way around this problem. Klotz rejected irrigation - the obvious method - due to the nature of the terrain. As it happened, the lack of an immediate solution did not make a great deal of difference. Before the turn of the century settlers in western Canada largely confined their attentions to the parkland zone. The Dominion Government did not even bother to finish the survey work in the southwest. For the time being, the grasslands were left to cattlemen.

Further extension of the farming frontier in the late 1880s and early 1890s was hampered by the near-drought conditions which prevailed, and by the depressed economic conditions of the time. Farmers, however, were not idle. During this period the agricultural technology and techniques necessary for dryland farming were being explored in both Canada and the United States.[2] This involved the development of methods of cultivation which trapped the limited moisture available in the ground, thereby storing two years' precipitation to grow one year's crop. Fallow fields were ploughed during the early summer when the rains normally fell, and then were constantly harrowed to a dust mulch to keep down weeds and to reduce moisture loss through capillary action. The next spring they were seeded, and other fields left fallow. Although, depending on the local soils and rainfall, between one-third and one-half the land on a farm would have to be left unused at any given time, this was better than not being able to farm at all. These developments made the next stage in westward expansion possible:

although 'plausible' might be more accurate, in the context of 1908.

By the mid-1890s conditions had begun to change in the Canadian West. In the first place, the weather improved after 1896. A period of regular and above-average rainfall began which provided optimum conditions for dryland farming in the semi-arid zone. Secondly, an international economic recovery led to a rapid increase in grain prices, and an equally rapid increase in the demand for Canadian prairie lands - particularly by American farmers. In 1891 the United States government had cut back on its distribution of free and cheap public lands, repealing the Distribution and Pre-emption Act of 1841 and reducing the size of entries allowable under the Desert Land Act of 1877. As the supply dwindled, the price of land rose, and many experienced American dryland farmers began to look north for a "last, best west".[3] Lastly, a new government came to power in Ottawa in 1896. The "progressive" Liberals were firmly committed to the promotion of agricultural settlement through the free homestead system, and launched an aggressive campaign to attract new immigrants to the West. With the greatly improved economic and climatic conditions of the late 1890s and early 1900s, they were very successful. At first, there was enough land available outside of the dry belt to satisfy the new demand. By 1905, however, the farming frontier had come up against the borders of the driest lands.[4]

When the long-term closed lease system was terminated in 1896, ranchers more or less accepted the fact that they could not hope to exclude farmers from the dry subhumid zone of the plains. Many of those who stayed in business did so by retreating into the heart of the semi-arid zone. They asserted, with considerable justification, that this was not suitable for agriculture. For a time they were able to keep homesteaders out, thanks to the co-operation of the Minister of the Interior, Clifford Sifton, and senior officials of the Dominion Lands Branch.[5] But in 1905, as pressure from land-seekers mounted, Sifton was superseded by Frank Oliver. Oliver, the owner of the *Edmonton Bulletin*, had been a leader in the attack on the "priveleged" position of ranchers, and was an advocate of mass settlement on free Dominion lands as the best way of promoting the rapid development of the West. One of his first actions as Minister was to terminate the stock water-reserve system. His next step was to set about opening up the semi-arid zone to homesteaders.[6]

In discussing the impact of the Dominion Lands Act of 1908, it is necessary to keep one point in mind: that there was nothing intrinsically 'wrong' with allowing, and even with encouraging, agricultural settlement in the park area. As three generations of farmers have amply demonstrated, a substantial portion of the land is entirely suitable for agriculture when properly cultivated. The problem with the 1908 act, and its implementation, was that no distinction whatsoever was made between land that was suitable for agriculture, and that which was not. As Chester Martin puts it,

> The limitations of feasible agriculture were left for many years to the decision of those least fitted to estimate them - the frontiersmen whose primitive methods of trial and error were costly above all other expedients for the settlement of Dominion Lands.[7]

Since the entire area had to be surveyed quarter-section by quarter-section, it would not have required a great deal of extra effort to identify areas with the poorest potential, and to remove them from the list of lands available. Nor, given the relatively small amount of land involved (and a judicious application of propaganda) is it probable that the Government would have been severely attacked for doing so. Unfortunately, the planning and execution of the whole affair were marked by a singular lack of foresight and a blithe disregard for criticism, constructive or otherwise.

When Frank Oliver presented his revised Dominion Lands Bill to the House of Commons in the summer of 1908, it was the subject of considerable discussion and debate. The bill had already gone through three versions, having been rejected in 1906 and 1907 on the grounds that its sweeping proposals would "unduly disturb the conditions of settlement and finance" in the developed areas of Manitoba and eastern Saskatchewan.[8] Oliver had proposed, in effect, that every acre of unsold Dominion land on the prairies - including undisposed railway reserves - be thrown open as homesteads and low-priced sales, and on very generous terms. The basic homestead regulations were to remain the same, in that six years of part-time residence and the cultivation of fifty acres would earn the patent on a quarter-section. In addition, however, a homesteader would be allowed to take up an adjacent "preemption" quarter-section for $3 an acre plus the fulfillment of cultivation and residence requirements. And, if there was no vacant land next to the homestead, he or she would be permitted to buy a non-adjacent "purchased homestead" quarter on similar terms.[9] This package was designed to provide every settler with a double-sized "homestead" made up of free and inexpensive land. The addition was deemed necessary to enable proper dryland farming, and to attract American settlers experienced in it.[10] While Oliver revised his bill to get it through the House, he did not alter its basic framework in doing so.

The minister's Dominion land bill was meant to serve two purposes: to promote settlement and to pay for the Hudson's Bay Railway. Both were to be attained by selling half of the remaining Dominion lands in the West. The odd-numbered sections of every township had formerly been reserved for use in subsidizing railway construction, but in many areas none of the railway companies had been willing to accept it as part of their grant - as in the case of the Canadian Pacific Railway, which took very few of the odd-numbered sections in the "railway belt" west of Moose Jaw. Oliver therefore proposed that the government itself sell this land, rather than working through a corporate middleman. By offering it at a reasonable price ($3 an acre), and in conjunction with free homesteads, settlers would be attracted in substantial numbers: meaning that more land could be sold than might otherwise be the case. Volume sales would thus offset relatively low prices, and sufficient funds for the railway would be collected.[11] Even members who opposed other facets of the bill supported it on the grounds that this was the only feasible way to pay for the line to Churchill.[12] To placate those who feared the plan would cause the aforementioned disruption in settled districts, Oliver proposed in 1908 that the preemption and purchased-homestead provisions be applied only in the dry belt. This was defined as the area between Moose Jaw and Calgary, on the east and west, and Battleford and the International Boundary, on the north and south (Map 14).[13] Oliver himself admitted that "this line ... is an arbitrary and not a scientific one," and one member observed

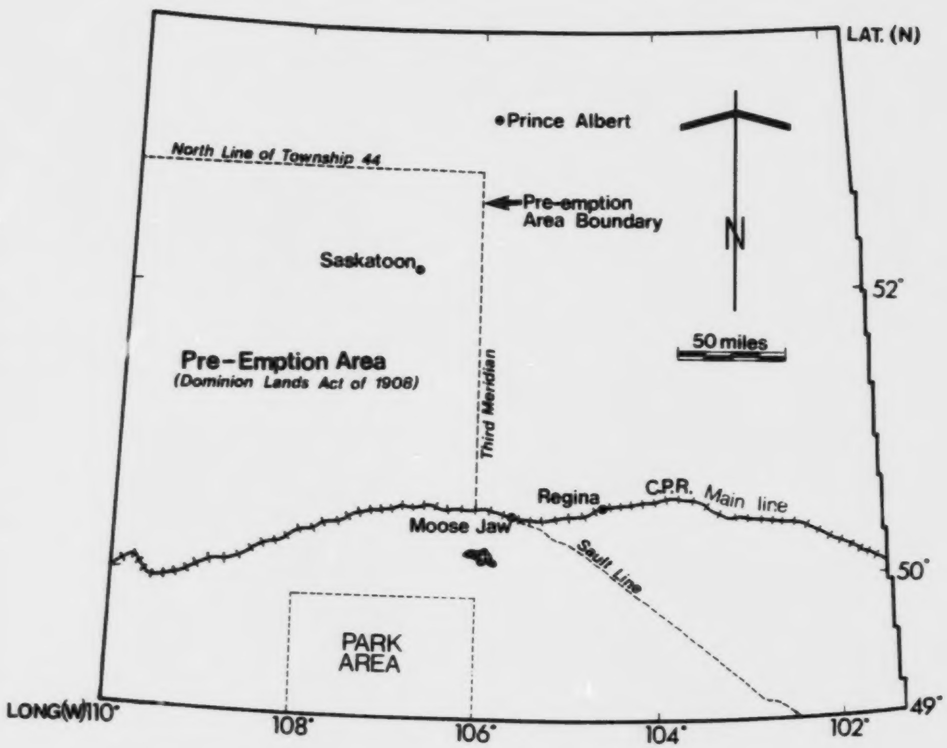

LAT. (N)
•Prince Albert
North Line of Township 44
Pre-emption Area Boundary
N
Saskatoon
52°
50 miles
Pre-Emption Area
(Dominion Lands Act of 1908)
Third Meridian
Regina
C.P.R. Main line
Moose Jaw
Sault Line
50°
PARK AREA
LONG(W)110°
108°
106°
104°
102°
49°

FIG. 14 The Pre-Emption Area in Saskatchewan, 1908-1909

that, "It looks as if he has taken the map and slung a pot of paint at it, and wherever the paint struck the map, those are the sections he had picked out to bring under the operation of the bill."[14] The reduction in scope greatly assisted in quelling opposition to the Bill, without causing it to be substantially altered. By far the greater part of the undisposed railway reserve land was in the new area anyway.

Quantitative questions took up most of the discussion time devoted to the bill in the 1908 sitting. In particular, its supporters laid great emphasis on the need for settlers to use summer-fallowing techniques in the preemption area, as a justification for the generous provisions for homestead-related sales. It was argued that "if a man can only farm one-half of his land in each year, he must have twice as much land if he is going to raise as much crop,"[15] and that, if this was not made available, settlers would not be attracted; especially Americans. Sam Hughes asserted that the preemption right would "bring in a splendid class of settlers such as those who made the American west."[16] There was very little argument on these points. Although one opposition member suggested that the sale prices were too low in relation to the potential productivity of some of the lands in question,[17] the need to make extra land available was generally accepted. Qualitative aspects of the arrangement received very little attention.

Two members criticized the government for failing to provide information about the character of the land involved in the homestead-related sales provisions of the bill. One, however, did so because he thought that the preemption zone should be extended.[18] The other, M.S. McCarthy, was also concerned with the whole question of land quality and farm size. Pointing out that the minister had been presenting versions of the bill since 1906, he complained that,

> there was plenty of time for the Minister to have an investigation in that country, by commission or otherwise, to ascertain the characteristics of the country in question, and to see what sections should be brought under the operation of the Bill.[19]

This had not been done. McCarthy suggested that a commission be established, as had been done in the United States in 1879, to set up "*a system and standard of classification* of public lands, as arable, irrigable, timber, pasturage ... lands and such other classes as may be deemed proper, *having due regard to humidity of climate ... and other physical characteristics of the land.*"[20] A similar approach to the problem, aimed at locating and opening up only those lands suitable for agricultural settlement, had been advocated by Oliver's deputy minister, W.W. Cory.[21] Such measures, however, were rejected by the minister and his supporters. It was assumed that, by giving each farmer 320 acres, the effects of poor quality land would be minimized.[22] Above all, as A.S. Morton has noted, it was taken for granted that the dryland techniques successful elsewhere "would succeed here also and transform the country into a grain-growing region."[23] In short, there was a marked tendency to identify quantity with quality. Politicians were not the only ones guilty of this. Because so many settlers were coming into his district, the land agent at Moose Jaw concluded (1908) that the area could therefore be considered "very promising from an agricultural point of view."[24]

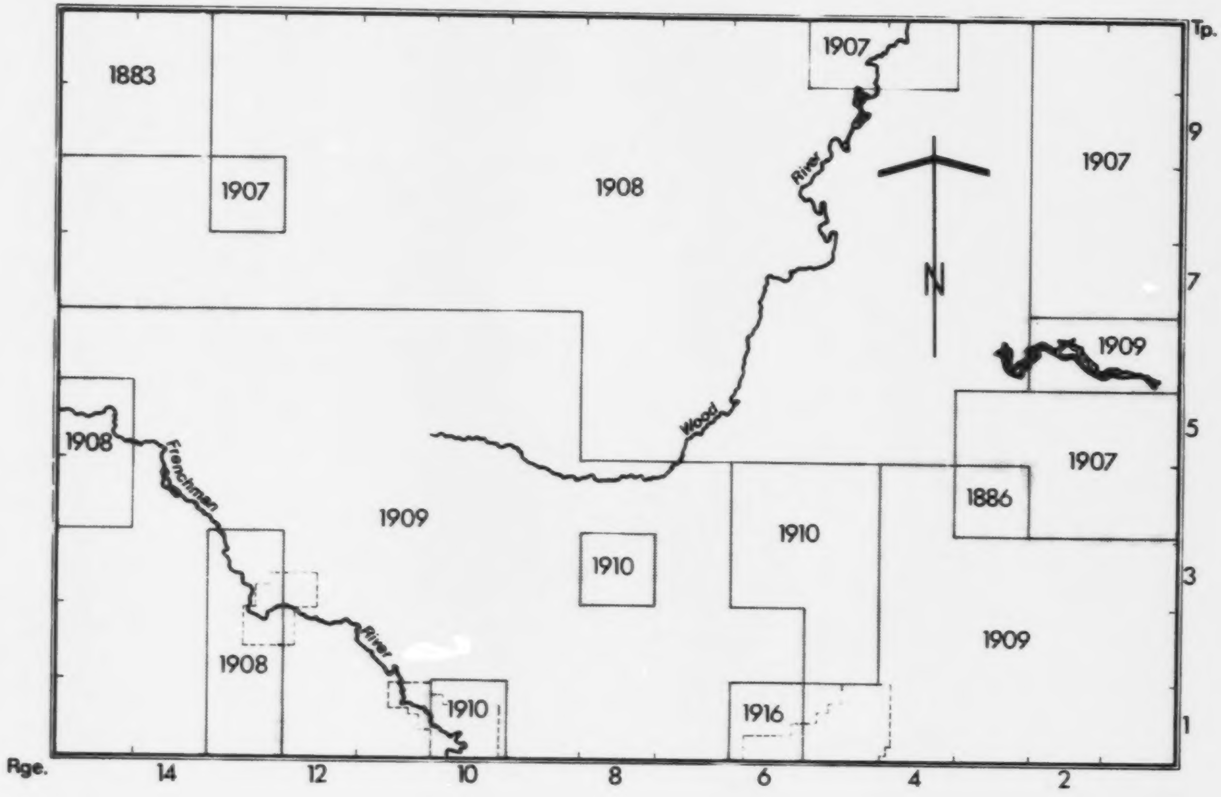
The Dominion Lands Bill was passed by the House and given Royal assent on 20 July 1908, and went into effect on September 1. While the Bill had been debated, preparations were underway to receive settlers, especially in the area between the Canadian Pacific Railway and the border. In March of 1907 the Moose Jaw land district (which included the park area) had been organized, and supplied with a very enthusiastic agent. "This district," he reported in 1908, "has a wonderful future before it, containing as it does, practically no waste land."[25] The subdivision survey of lands along the border was begun in 1906-7 and proceeded at a rapid pace. As of 1 January 1908, for example, some 314 townships along the border, mostly in Saskatchewan, remained to be subdivided. In that year alone 145 were completed,[26] and the balance were finished in the next year. In the park area the first work was done in 1907, taking in tps. 7-10, rges. 1-2 W3 (inclusive) and the townships east of Wood Mountain. The next year most of the remaining northern townships, down to the township 6 line, were completed, and in 1909 and 1910 those remaining in the south were subdivided (Map 15).[27] Much of this work, particularly in the north, was done with settlers leaning over the surveyors' shoulders.

It would have been highly appropriate, if somewhat undignified, had the governor general fired a starting-gun with one hand while signing the act with the other. Agent J. Rutherford at Moose Jaw reported that,

> The great stampede for land commenced on September 1 last [1908] when the new Dominion Lands Bill came into force, and since that time the opening from time to time of a large number of newly surveyed townships has resulted in some particularly noted rushes for land.[28]

A considerable number of settlers were already in the country at the time, many having taken up land under the old homestead regulations in anticipation of the new law. By the end of 1908 some 5,189 homestead entries had been made in the Moose Jaw land district, out of 18,825 in the whole of the province.[29] The agent reported that "of the large numbers of townships which were surveyed and opened for entry last season, very few of these homesteads are now available for entry, while squatters are going into residence in adjoining townships in advance of the survey."[30] In 1909, 8,720 homestead entries were made in the land district, out of 21,154 in Saskatchewan, plus 7,229 preemption and 249 purchased-homestead entries. The next year, the number of homesteads entered for in the province remained the same (21,575), but the Moose Jaw land district's contribution was 10,921 homesteads, 7,716 preemptions and 331 purchased homesteads entered for: although 5,045 homestead entries were also cancelled.[31] The rush went on until 1913. Between 1910 and 1914, 20,709 quarter-sections were taken up in the district as homesteads and homestead-related sales, of which 9,343 homestead entries were cancelled.[32]

In the park area, the southern portion of the Moose Jaw land district, the first homesteaders appeared in 1907, taking land near Wood River under the old act.[33] One local historian recorded that the trails south from Moose Jaw and west from Weyburn were covered with "a steady stream of vehicles, carrying land seekers, or settlers and settlers' effects."[34] The leading edge of settlement thereafter kept pace with the surveyors, and within two years the first homesteaders had reached the crest of the Wood Mountain plateau.[35]


Tp.
9
7
5
3
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Rge.
14
12
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8
6
4
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1883
1907
1908
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1907
1886
1910
1909
1908
1909
1910
1908
1910
1916
Frenchman
River
Wood
River
N
1/2" = 6 miles

FIG.15 Dates of Subdivision in the Park Area

In 1910 the first settlers had entered the Val Marie area.[36] This influx was further accelerated, in 1911, by the announcement of the Canadian Pacific Railway's plans to build part of their southern line north of Wood Mountain. It was reported that, "With the assurance of railway facilities, the country south between here and the international boundary is fast settling up."[37] By 1914 the first pre-railway settlement rush had begun to slow down[38] (although this did not mark the end of either new settlement or development). Nonetheless, within just six years the park area had been turned from an isolated ranching country into a well-settled one increasingly dominated by farmers. This transformation was entirely due to Frank Oliver and his 1908 act.

The distinguishing characteristics of the initial wave of settlement were, first, its volume and pace, and second, the process of trial and error which it entailed. The only criterion which most settlers had to go on in the selection of their lands was their own judgement. Few had sufficient experience to make this reliable. The result was a great deal of turnover in land. Many settlers would take a quarter-section - any quarter-section - immediately in order to establish a claim. They would then look around and, if they found more desirable land, cancel their original entry and take it up. In analyzing land transactions in R.M. 45 (Mankota) Bruce Peel found that 53 per cent of the quarter-sections involved had been entered for more than once for homesteads or preemptions: and 18 per cent three or more times.[39] This practice was recognized, and even approved of by Dominion lands officers, who saw cancellations as "an indication of alertness" on the part of settlers.[40] This is one way of looking at it. Another is that the procedure simply showed that many settlers had very little idea of what they were doing. They seem to have assumed that, since the government saw fit to open it for settlement, any piece of land flat enough to put a plough on was more or less suitable for agriculture. Nothing was done by said government to disabuse them of this notion. A considerable amount of marginal land was accordingly taken up, with the natural result that "Within a decade after settlement abandonment of individual farms and whole communities had begun,[41] and this was only the beginning.

The only group which comes out of the "great stampede" and its after-effects with much credit is the ranchers who suffered the most from it. In opening up the semi-arid zone to homesteaders without attempting either to restrict access to marginal lands, or to keep the settlement rush under control once started, the Dominion Government neglected its responsibilities. The settlers themselves were certainly not blameless, for they took advantage of the loopholes in the act at every turn. In many instances, they also showed extremely poor judgement in their selection of lands, and later, in their farming practices. Moreover, they and their representatives in Ottawa were the ones who had subjected the government to intense public pressure to open the area in the first place. Nonetheless, "guilt" is not the same thing as "responsibility."

The government's duty was to dispose of Dominion lands in such a way as to derive the maximum benefit from them, in terms of national and regional development. At the time, this entailed 'trading' public land for the most effective and efficient form of private settlement (i.e., by individuals) that was possible. The initiative in this lay with the Dominion which, since it owned the land, could set the terms and conditions of transfer and settlement. Since those which it set out were poorly adapted to the character of the land in question - largely through a failure to look into the matter - and since the transfer process itself was poorly regulated, the government, and particularly the minister, must bear the responsibility for the consequences. This only seems fair, since the burden of suffering which the act of 1908 produced was borne by ranchers and farmers, not by legislators. If Captain Palliser's ghost was indeed haunting the park area in the 1930s, it is to be hoped that after 1933 Frank Oliver's was there to keep him company and to witness the consequences of his settlement policy.

PART III THE POST-RANCHING ERA

INTRODUCTION

The grasslands area of southwestern central Saskatchewan was one of Canada's last agricultural frontiers. It was long thought unfit for agricultural settlement, as it was situated wholly within the most desolate reaches of Captain John Palliser's infamous Triangle. Even Clifford Sifton's resourceful immigration schemes after 1896 had no effect upon the area as long as there remained even marginally better lands elsewhere. By the midpoint of the first decade of the 20th century, however, good farmlands were at a premium in western Canada and still thousands of immigrants were arriving annually. Not unnaturally, pressure was exerted upon the authorities to open to settlement such remote and marginal lands as the Peace River country, southeastern Alberta and southwestern Saskatchewan. The result was the Homestead Act of 1908.

The narrative that follows attempts to describe the experiences of those homesteaders and their descendants who farmed grasslands. It is based on historical sources which deal primarily with the eight rural municipalities that lie directly north of the proposed park area. There are very few sources which deal directly with any part of the three core areas of the proposed park, and none which would provide a comprehensive narrative of the post-ranching era there. Thus there are obvious limitations to the following narrative. It is significant, however, that despite the great variation found in the territory bounded by the eight rural municipalities, local settlers had remarkably similar experiences. This is to say that every district in Grasslands was marginal to some degree, and that this marginality was the principal force acting upon all settlers of the area.

It can be stated with little reservation that there was farm settlement in at least one of the core areas of the proposed park. Phil S. Long, in his *The Great Canadian Range*, has written that in 1919,

> More sod houses and shacks were springing up close to the
> 76 [Ranch] leases, some of them right along the fences.
> Just outside the fences were hundreds of acres of
> beautiful grass turned under by the plows. (p. 63)

The "76" Ranch included part of Core Area A. Furthermore, it is worth noting that many of the ranchers who located in or near the core areas homesteaded the quarter-sections on which their buildings were situated. To determine, on the other hand, the identities of those homesteaders of the proposed park area is a herculean task which might well take as long to complete as the authors took to write this preliminary history. As such, it must for the moment be left undone.

CHAPTER VIII HOMESTEADING: 1908-14

Introduction

The Homestead Act was irresponsibly framed. The lands to which it applied were not of even quality and yet the legislation took no account of this. Vast tracts of Grasslands were suitable for little other than cattle ranching, and still they were opened to agricultural settlers. And yet this same legislation was enthusiastically received by thousands of immigrants. Such was the desperation of the landless newcomers.

The Settlement of Grasslands

Prospective homesteaders were quick to respond to the legislation of 1908. Between 1908 and 1914 thousands of settlers spread throughout Grasslands, beginning at the northern and eastern fringes and then diffusing to the more remote, less beckoning areas. The initial flow was in large measure determined by the presence of the Canadian Pacific's mainline to the north and its Soo Line which ran from southeast to northwest along the area's eastern boundary. Settlement of Grasslands proceeded, then, from northeast to southwest.

Homesteaders were most averse to the uplands, preferring instead to settle the more fertile broken areas. The somewhat more luxuriant growths of vegetation in low areas and the inadequacy of contemporary machinery and motive power for cultivating severely undulating terrain probably contributed to this pattern of land disposal. Thus the distribution of farms in the region took the shape of a crescent skirting the central uplands.

The speed at which settlement occurred was greater than that for most of the western interior, for Grasslands was comparatively small in size and the demand for land was heavy. From the beginning of the land rush in 1908 until the taking of the Dominion census three years later, nearly 6000 persons moved into the area.[1] While it may be presumed that the initial influx was most intense, there is no method of ascertaining annual variations in the rate of ingress. In terms of seasonal immigration, settlers most often came out in the early spring as that permitted them a maximum length of time in which to establish a homestead. It is reasonable to assume that immigration to the area was fairly steady until the start of the Great War, after which it fell off markedly, as was the case in the rest of Canada. By 1916 the local population was over 11,000.[2]

The ethnic breakdown of the Grasslands population defies analysis. The problems encountered in attempting such categorization are fully discussed in Appendix G. It will be sufficient to note that the population was a mixture of Anglo-Saxons, Germans, Norwegians, French, Swedes, and various Eastern European groups. Anglo-Saxons predominated numerically. There was a vague pattern in the geographical distribution of these groups. The French formed a fairly continuous band of settlement to the north, with the Gravelbourg district as their core area. A long finger of French settlement pointed down to the Val Marie district in the extreme southwest. Stretching from Wood Mountain to Assiniboia, there was a heavy concentration of Eastern Europeans, notably Roumanians. Many Scandinavians also settled this area. The Anglo-Saxons and the Germans, while numerically ascendant, were the most dispersed ethnic groups.

It appears that any discussion of the population with respect to place of origin must remain statistically unverified, for the census is of scant assistance. Numerous reminiscences by local settlers, and a host of other sources do, however, provide a partial record of this information as well as some indication of the reasons why various groups immigrated. The French population, mainly Québecois, were driven west by a lack of opportunities in their native province. As Lucille Tessier has explained:

> Depuis cinquantaine d'années, un phénomène inquiètant existait au Québec: de nombreuses pressions économiques occasionnaient des changements démographiques. La spécialization et le méchanization agricole avait fait éclater les cadres de la population rurale. Le commerce et l'industrie en voie d'expansion n'offraient pas suffisament de débouches pour la population qui se multipliait rapidement.[3]

In neighboring Ontario, a shortage of farmland and a growing population caused a similar exodus. Eastern Europeans came for any number of reasons, ranging from land shortages to aversion to military service. Many Roumanians, for example,

> were induced to immigrate to Western Canada by agents of the Canadian Pacific, the Canadian Northern and the Grand Trunk Pacific Railways to provide labor for the construction of the numerous branchlines then being built.[4]

The Scandinavians and the Germans differed from other ethnic groups in that they often came to the region by a circuitous route through the United States, where many had previously homesteaded. Most of those who settled in the Grasslands appear to have been from the border states, although clearly some were from farther afield. Their main reason for coming was cheap land.[5] In the United States the closing of the frontier and the accompanying rise in land values made it impossible for many to continue as farmers. In North Dakota, for example, land values rose 321.3 per cent between 1900 and 1910, benefitting only those who already owned their farms. Tenant farmers were in the unenviable position of having their crop receipts outstripped by land values. As a result, over 600,000 American immigrants crossed into Canada between 1896 and 1914, and many of these settled in Grasslands.

Despite their diverse ethnic backgrounds and countries of origin, the homesteaders who came to Grasslands were united by a common desire to be, or to remain, farmers. This is a prosaic theme in Western Canadian history, but in Grasslands it had quite unusual consequences.

The rapid and extensive influx of settlers after 1908 caused serious dislocation of an existing population, one not indigenous to the region. Since the 1880s Grasslands had been a ranching enclave and now the spread of farm settlement forced ranchers to abandon the area or to retreat to the uplands where the land was largely unfit for agricultural production. Within less than a decade farming replaced ranching as the foundation of the local economy, and the institutions of agriculture took precedence over those of stockraising.

The Homesteading Process

The homesteading process began long before the settler filed a land claim or turned his first furrow, and it began in a variety of ways. For many eastern Canadians, joining a harvest excursion to the West was the first step in the process. Harvey Filson, a native of Amherst Island, Ontario, tried his hand at harvesting with an excursion crew near Moose Jaw in the autumn of 1909, having spent the summer working in British Columbia.[6] When the crop was off, Filson joined a small group of land-seekers who were interested in homesteading in the Wood River district. There Filson selected a homestead quarter on which he filed a claim in the following spring.

The experiences of the Straza family, who eventually settled in the Wood Mountain district, were quite different.[7] In the spring of 1908 Eli Straza left his job as watchman in a village in the province of Buchovina, Austria, and sailed for Canada. When he landed at Montreal he was met by his two eldest sons, who had been in the country for some time. Eli found work in a wire factory in Montreal, and after a year he was joined by his wife and their other five children. They repeatedly heard stories of free land in western Canada and in 1911 they journeyed to Regina to investigate the situation and to earn homesteading capital. Eli and his son Dan found employment with the Canadian Pacific Railway, building branch lines through southern Saskatchewan, while another son, John, worked in a Regina brewery. After three years in Regina and another child, the Strazas traded their house for some machinery and livestock and travelled to Wood Mountain to take up a homestead.

Among the thousands of settlers who came north from the United States were Niels and Martha Gording.[8] Born in Denmark, they married and sailed for New York City in 1908. A rail trip to South Dakota followed and Niels found a job on an experimental farm while Martha worked as a housekeeper. By saving their earnings they were able to purchase a farm in the state, but in 1911 they sold this "at a good profit," and trekked north to Saskatchewan. There were still homestead lands available in the Rockglen district and there they settled.

Certain experiences were common to all who homesteaded in Grasslands. The initial task of every prospective settler was the selection of a satisfactory homestead site. Several factors entered into this selection. Ideally, a homestead quarter would have good soil, a clean and continous water supply, a fine stand of trees, and a rail line close by. Such was seldom the case in Grasslands, where the rush for land compelled settlers to file quickly and often indiscriminately. There are numerous records of persons who 'filed blind,' meaning that they filed a claim on land they had never seen. As was the case in all western Canada, those who came earliest obtained the best land.

The selection of land usually began in one of two ways. The land-seeker, having reached a 'jumping-off' point on the railway, such as Morse, might ask around town in an attempt to find someone knowledgeable about the homesteading area. Sometimes this action resulted in free advice, sometimes in the exchange of money for advice, sometimes in the retaining of a guide who would then accompany the homesteader to a suitable site. The alternative to this method of obtaining information was to inquire at the nearest Land Titles Office about the lands which had not yet been claimed. This method of securing information was more reliable but sometimes more costly, for there were only two land title offices where such information could be obtained, one at Willow Bunch and the other at Moose Jaw. Travelling to an office could be an expensive venture, depending on the location of the prospective homesteader.

Once the location of available lands was known, the land-seeker would make an excursion to the district, often accompanied by one or two other prospective settlers. They would travel by buggy or democrat, taking along camping equipment and enough food to last several days.[9] When one of the men spotted a piece of land which appealed to him as a homestead site, the men would search for the surveyor's stake, which was always placed in the northeast corner of the quarter-section. From this corner of the quarter-section the settler could take in and appraise at a glance all the land that would be his. On the surveyor's stake was recorded, in Roman numerals, the legal description of the land which was needed in order to file a claim. These numerals would be taken down in a notebook for use at the Land Titles Office. This whole process would be repeated until each man found a desirable quarter-section. In most cases, a land-seeker would also make second and third selections in the event that his preferred quarter was already claimed. When all was completed, the party journeyed to the nearest land office.

Almost all of the land in Grasslands was claimed at the Land Titles Office in Moose Jaw. This office had been opened in March of 1907 to serve southwestern Saskatchewan, and it was the site of much frantic activity. When the Homestead Act came into effect on 1 September 1908, there was a crowd of 1000 men milling in front of the Moose Jaw office, waiting to file.[10] Edna Banks has described the office as it was in the autumn of 1910:

> They [her husband and friends] found the Land Office doing a Land office business and in a state of wild uproar and confusion ... Homesteaders, impatient and disgruntled and wanting to file their claim, had to wait around for days awaiting their turn ... Some sat on the Land Office steps all night, hoping they would get into the office with the staff in the morning. Some even tried crawling through the window and on some mornings, the crowd, milling around the office door, was so dense, that the office staff could not get into their office, until a way was cleared.[11]

Gaining entrance to the Land Titles Office may have been time-consuming, but once inside the land-seeker was compensated by the rapidity with which registration took place. The registrar of land titles, having received a ten-dollar registration fee and the legal description of the land, made a check of the township diagram to make sure that the quarter-section in question was not already claimed; if it was not, the name of the land-seeker along with the date of entry would be neatly written into the appropriate square on the township diagram. The fortunate land-seeker could then get on with the establishment of a homestead.

Establishing a Homestead

In order to gain title to a quarter-section, the homesteader was obliged to follow the regulations set out in the Homestead Act of 1908, which meant, in effect, establishing a physical presence on the land. Since the homesteader probably registered his land in Moose Jaw, his first task involved transporting his possessions and his family (if he had any) to the site. This was usually accomplished with the aid of a wagon or a hayrack, the latter being more cumbersome but also more capacious. The material possessions which a settler had, depended upon his individual wealth or upon the wealth of his family. The "best equipped settlers," according to Edna Banks,

> came from Ontario; with carloads of settlers' effects, nice horses, wagons, lumber for building and most all the necessary implements to go right to work and prepare the land for wheat.[12]

Most settlers were not able to afford the cost of shipping 'carloads' of effects; indeed, many did not possess a carload of effects. The goods which a settler most often brought with him, or purchased along the way, included mainly essentials like a walking plough, cooking utensils, some groceries, perhaps a stove, some lumber, and of course, clothing and other personal effects.[13] An assortment of livestock and poultry generally completed the list. Myrtle Moorhouse recalled the day her family left Swift Current for their homestead near the Buffalo Horn Valley. Their wagon was loaded with "two pigs, a dozen hens, and as many necessities as possible," and behind it followed two cows and a yearling colt.[14] Either horses or oxen pulled the wagonload of goods. Horses were able to travel much faster than oxen, covering perhaps 10 or 12 miles in one day while a yoke of oxen could not go half as far.[15] Despite their plodding, oxen were preferred by most settlers because they cost about half as much to purchase as a team of horses.[16]

In the larger towns along the railway the site of a wagon burdened with chickens and steamer trunks and bouncing children was common after 1908. Mrs. Elizabeth Ruthig reminisced about her stay at Moose Jaw while her husband searched for a homestead in 1910:

> Every day ... we watched the pageant of many families in horse and ox-drawn wagons, starting on their long journey to the South, heavily laden with supplies. Often there would be a caravan of fifty to sixty teams ... We knew our turn was coming.[17]

When it came time for a family to leave for their homestead, they set out from town on one of the numerous well-worn trails which led south or west. Because of their utility these trails were, as one early settler stated, "very much a part of our way of life during the pioneering era."[18] Since no journey of over 15 miles could be made in one day, there arose stopping-houses along the trails. These were usually the homes of settlers who had been established for a couple of years and were of such a size as to accommodate several families at once. Meals could be bought for about 25 cents,[19] depending on the generosity of the stopping-house owner, and might consist of such staples as beefsteak, sourdough bread, fruit and cream.[20] One proprietor, a man of singular humor, is remembered for the indelicate picture which hung over his dining table. It showed several hogs feeding at a trough, with the caption "First Come, First Served."[21] Sleeping accommodations, either a bed in the bunkhouse or a feather tick on the floor, were available for 50 cents per night.[22] If a settler wished to put his horses or oxen in the barn, it cost yet another half dollar.[23]

It was often a week or more before the homesteader reached his quarter-section. As soon as convenient, he chose the location of his buildings and ploughed a furrow around that patch of ground. The furrow served as a fireguard, for Grasslands was burnt black almost every year before there was extensive settlement. Myrtle Moorhouse remembered a fire so bad that their small herd of cows had to wander for miles to find grazing and milk so bitter and burnt-tasting that it had to be thrown out.[24] The provincial government, realizing the threat of fire to the livelihood of these people, provided assistance for the ploughing of fireguards throughout the early years.[25]

Shelter was of much concern to the new homesteader, especially if he was not able to reach his land until late summer or early fall. A house, even one made of sod, could not be erected in one day, and so the first few days on the new quarter were spent in an improvised shelter. Bruce Peel has described two varieties which were commonly used in southwestern central Saskatchewan:

> He [the homesteader] might take the end-gate out of the wagon box, turn the box upside down, and live underneath. If he had a hayrack, he might turn it on its side, prop it up, and live on the leeward side.[26]

There were probably also those settlers who lived for several days or a week in a canvas tent, but of them no record has been found.

In a region where the only trees were stunted poplars growing in distant coulees, sod was the basic building material. It has been mentioned that many settlers brought lumber with them on their first trip out, but this was seldom enough for more than window frames and a door. A sod house required little skill or knowledge to construct, and had the virtue of costing next to nothing. George Shepherd has described the building process:

> The true soddy had four walls. The building material came from a twelve- or fourteen-inch furrow ploughed from a dried-out slough bottom. The ploughed strips were cut into thirty-inch lengths, laid grass-side down and levelled with a sharp spade. The sods were handled and arranged like bricks ... The floor was packed dirt. The roof was supported by poplar poles laid to a central ridge pole.[27]

The poplar poles used in the roof were usually hauled to the site from a coulee miles away, and obtaining them lengthened the construction period. Often the inside of the house was plastered with mud until the walls had a smooth finish. The size of the house depended upon the amount of time a settler could spare, the amount of capital he possessed, and the size of his family. Most first houses consisted of only one room, and were usually no larger than 12 by 16 feet. Additional rooms could be built as required. The sod walls of these homes did provide a measure of insulation against the cold of winter, but it was no protection against spring and summer rains. As one early settler remarked, "a three-day rain outside meant a five-day rain inside."[28] In light of such inconveniences it is little wonder that by 1915 the sod houses was almost a thing of the past.[29]

Home furnishings were simple and usually improvised. In that section of the house which might be designated the living room, wooden boxes substituted for chairs,[30] and a steamer trunk might serve as a table until something better could be built or purchased. Beds were probably make-shift affairs or nothing more than blankets and quilts spread out on the floor in one corner of the room. Fortunate indeed was the settler who owned a bedstead.[31] The kitchen area was the best furnished part of the house, if only because of the large number of cooking utensils such as "granite cooking pots, tin milk pans and dippers, heavy pottery dishes, iron pots, dutch ovens and frying pans, and a wooden butter bowl and paddle for working butter."[32] A tub and washboard for laundering might also fill the kitchen.[33] The entire house was heated by a single stove. There are numerous records of settlers owning straw-burning stoves,[34] but unless these burned prairie grass with equal 'efficiency' it is unlikely that they were used until after the first crop was harvested. Wood was so scarce in most of the region that one pioneer recalled seeing "telegraph poles with hour-glass figures. Travellers had chipped kindling from them to start campfires."[35] As a result of the wood shortage buffalo chips, or dried cow and horse dung, were used as fuel. In a situation where most people were unable to furnish their homes adequately, it was exceedingly difficult to relieve the harshness of the interiors. Few homesteaders were as fortunate as the Ruthigs of the McCord district who were able to paint their ceiling white, decorate the bare mud walls with flowery wallpaper, and hang net curtains in three of their windows.[36]

The drabness of the settlers' homes was matched only by the monotony of their diet. In the Aneroid district, the staple foods were oatmeal, rice, bacon, and bread.[37] A pioneer from the Hazenmore area recollected that breakfast consisted of porridge, fried salt pork, eggs, fried potatoes, bread or biscuits, fruit or honey, and tea or coffee.[38] Wild fruit was available only in season, and then only to those with perseverance and stamina, for it was inevitably a long distance between fruit bushes. Wild game supplemented many diets, but this too was difficult to obtain and even more difficult to preserve. When rainfall was plentiful it was easy to grow bountiful vegetable gardens, and this, coupled with the impossibility of storing fresh meat for long, tended to give meals a vegetable imbalance.[39] There was undoubtedly some local variation in diet, due to the geographical dispersion of the various ethnic groups, but this would not have been extensive. Not until service centres arose along local railway branch-lines did meals become less repetitious.

One thing which the homesteader could not necessarily obtain by dint of hard work was a good supply of well water. George Shepherd has written that "the search for water was a continuous one on the endless prairies,"[40] and certainly the statement contains more than a grain of truth if one means clean water. Before there were wells in a district, settlers were obliged to fetch water from nearby springs, creeks and sloughs, and this was only possible in a wet year. Sloughs were the last resort, for their stagnant waters often harbored the bacteria of typhoid fever.[41] When someone in a district did find a good supply of well water, it was shared by all members of the community.

A fireguard, a sod house, buffalo chips, and a well were the requisites of life for every grasslands homesteader. Buildings such as a sod barn or chicken coop were erected as soon as possible before the onset of winter. Root cellars were dug, in which settlers kept vegetables and other perishables. These were the tangible facets of daily life in southwest central Saskatchewan and without them survival would have been impossible. But there was also an intangible side to living in this desolate country, involving the psychological adjustment demanded by farming a lonely region. Myrtle Moorhouse has given expression to this side of the settlement process:

> I stood in one spot and looked all around, especially in the early evening. It was like a huge bowl of blue turned over us. No matter where we turned, we could see the horizon, a complete dome, and I marvelled at it. With a ridge to the west, the waters of springtime divided, flowing to the Hudson Bay to the north, and the Gulf of Mexico on the south. On this ridge, one could see for ten miles, and I have observed a building on it from this ten mile distance by bright moonlight on a winter's night. There was a profusion of beautiful wild flowers, of all unknown varieties. Their scent and colours were an everlasting wonder. The valleys held a mystic feeling that made me think I was the first human who ever walked there ... There were no land marks, no fences. Just the odd dot of a shack and at night someone's light.[42]

To some, like Moorhouse, the stark beauty of the Grasslands was an awesome delight; to others, it was a curse. Many people, accustomed to the effervescent social life of eastern towns and villages, could not adjust to the isolation which marked the region. To such persons the winter months were unbearable, for the cold and snow reduced visitations to a minimum, and it seems certain that more than one was stuck with that peculiar malaise of the mind known as "cabin fever."[43] This was the unforeseen penance with which some were burdened because of their hunger for land.

Farmers Versus Ranchers

The rapid intrusion of farmers into a ranching enclave had two contrasting effects. First, the clash of economic interests of farmer and rancher precipitated a climate of social hostility which lasted as long as both groups inhabited the region. Indeed, it remains unclear whether or not the conflict was ever resolved, for as late as 1964 journalists were still writing articles about the region with intriguing titles such as, "Why There is a Feud Between Ranchers and Farmers."[44] The second effect was the evolution of a sense of social community among the homesteading population, characterized by informal social organizations.

The ranchers were from the first opposed to the movement of farmers into their territory. The idea of fences and road allowances dividing the grazing range was abhorrent to them, but even more objectionable was the coming of the herd law to their land. This law restricted the cattle and horses of the ranchers from running at large through populated, grain-growing areas. This effectively reduced the amount of land open to grazing and so threatened the economic status of the ranchers. The prospect of such an unsatisfactory future prompted ranchers to treat incoming settlers with little courtesy. As Niels and Martha Gording said of their reception in the Rockglen district:

> We were not very welcome to the ranchers of this area, as they disliked the homesteaders coming in to take up the land, and we were turned away more than once when we asked for a meal, a place to sleep, or some feed for our horses.[45]

This hostility on the part of the ranchers was finally channelled into a formal organization known as the Saskatchewan Stock Growers' Association, which is dealt with elsewhere in this report.[46]

As several writers have suggested, the animosity between rancher and farmer stemmed from more than economic differences. Because of their distinct heritages, ranchers and farmers possessed markedly different world views. Perhaps John Bennett expressed this best when he wrote that,

> The farmer was there to establish a civilization, and in contrast to the rancher's attitude, the wilderness was for him something to tame, not to glory in.[47]

These contrasting views had profound implications. One of the most obvious is the differing impact of ranchers and farmers on the environment. Ranchers lived in relative harmony with the land around them, while farmers were obliged by economic necessity to change it.[48] Predatory animals, grain-consuming rodents, and weeds were all exterminated as quickly as possible by the farmer, resulting in far-reaching disturbances of the ecosystem. On another level, the different world views influenced the nature of local social organization. In a recent study, Seena Kohl has demonstrated that the ranchers, "even when there were women and children [to consider], had no expectations of urban amenities such as stores, schools, and medical care. They expected to provide for themselves."[49] In a farming community, by contrast, women and children were always more numerous and they,

> created demands for social amenities based upon their past experiences of nucleated settlement. They wanted schools, churches, stores, and the establishment of a community social life.[50]

If Kohl's analysis is correct, then the more balanced sex ratio of the homesteading era may be cited as contributing to the speed with which a social community was established in the grasslands region. As soon as several families had settled in a district it became the site of much social intercourse. Picnics, and sports such as baseball and football, filled the summer months, while winter was taken up by card parties, dances, debates, singing, and other activities requiring little or no equipment.[51] These were the pastimes of the homesteaders until districts were completely settled and more leisure time and spare cash were available; they were the necessary prelude to the many formal organizations of the following decades.

Conclusions

The homesteading period was over by 1914. The beginning of the Great War halted international migration, but it did not matter for there were few unoccupied acres of farmland remaining in the Grasslands area. In fact, as later events would prove, the region was already overpopulated.

Several of the topics of this chapter, such as the desire to farm, the acquisition of a homestead site, and the establishment of a physical presence on that site, are the universals of the settlement process in western Canada. The first has always been accommodated by means of governmental regulation. The second has been determined by the nature of contemporary governmental policy, and by the availability of lands and the speed at which settlement occurs. The third varies in detail according to the physical demands of the homesteading region.

The establishment of a physical presence is of greatest concern here, for this involves factors independent of legislative control. The homesteads of Grasslands reflected the settlers' adaptation to the uniqueness of their setting. Because trees were scarce, sod houses and buffalo chip fuel were common. Because water was scarce, wells were shared. Because the area was isolated from railways and service centres, monotonous diets were endured and the loneliness of winter was mitigated by card parties, dances, and thoughts of an early spring. Because the area was a ranching enclave, social conflict flourished in the early years. While it may be argued that adaptation is pronounced on every agricultural frontier, when considering the grasslands one must attempt to comprehend the degree of adaptation. In a very real sense, then, the story of homesteading in Grasslands is a tale of human resourcefulness and perseverance with few parallels in western Canadian history.

Note on Sources

Demography is the key to the immigrations of 1908-14, and as always it is well to begin with the Census of Canada and the quinquennial censuses. Due largely to the vast expanses within the census divisions of the day, the statistics obtained from this source are of limited value. Two studies which are helpful in placing the growth of population in Grasslands in broader perspective are A. Saddozai, The

Growth and Changing Patterns in Distribution of Population in Saskatchewan, 1901-1961 (AS Regina, pamphlet file on population), and R. Viscero, "Population Changes in the Semi-Arid Area of Saskatchewan," in M.J. Matheson (ed.) The Semi-Arid Area of Saskatchewan (Ottawa: Geographical Branch, Department of Mines and Technical Surveys, 1959), unpublished manuscript, pp. 201-26. With regard to the immigration of specific ethnic groups, try such works as N.L. Gold, "American Immigration to the Prairie Provinces of Canada, 1890-1933," Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, 1933; E.H. Oliver, "The Settlement of Saskatchewan to 1914," Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Series # 3, Vol. 20 (1920), Section 2, 63-88; Donatien Frémont, Les Françaises dans L'Ouest Canadien, Winnipeg: Les Éditions la Liberté, 1959, and Reverend Fr. Vasile Hategan, Fifty Years of the Roumanian Orthodox Church in America, Michigan: Roumanian Orthodox Episcopate, 1959. The official policy of the Dominion Government regarding immigration in this period is summed up in Mabel F. Timlim, "Canada's Immigration Policy, 1896-1910," Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, XXVI (November, 1960).

Information on the actual process of homesteading and the society which arose out of it is of greatest importance here. The most valuable sources remain the reminiscences of the homesteaders themselves, and a number are available in Regina and Saskatoon which deal specifically with this region. While most of these remain in manuscript form, several have been published such as Myrtle Moorhouse's valuable Buffalo Horn Valley, Regina, n.p., 1973. The local histories of the region, many of which were published for the province's jubilee in 1955, also contain a wealth of material on homesteading. Few studies will, however, surpass Bruce B. Peel's masterful "R.M. 45: The Social History of the Rural Minicipality," unpublished Master's thesis, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon Campus, 1946, as a detailed chronicle of the homesteading experience in southwestern central Saskatchewan. An examination of the newspapers published in the region, while a somewhat laborious task, will undoubtedly pay dividends. Unfortunately most of those from the region date from the twenties. A thorough reading of each paper's Jubilee Edition, published in 1955, is also suggested. Finally, the catalogue of "Pioneer Surveys" taken by the Saskatchewan Archives during the 1950s must be consulted. This consists of an inventory of the individual replies to a series of questionnaires relating to such things as pioneer shelters, church life, diet, and so on. It undoubtedly contains valuable material on the homesteading process in Grasslands.

From this cursory list of materials on homesteading, it is readily apparent that much further research can and must be done. While the legislation background of the migration to Grasslands can easily be obtained, a great deal of work must be done in order to reconstruct the demographic structure of Grasslands population over the years and the details of the homesteading process. An adequate analysis of social structure and organization remains to be done as well. Since the region is ethnically and geographically diverse, it is probable that much local variation exists with respect to such things as architectural style, diet, social customs, dress, family organization, and so on. These topics and more must be thoroughly explored if one is to gain an adequate knowledge of the homesteading period in the Grasslands region.

CHAPTER IX AGRICULTURE

Introduction

Agriculture became the local economic base in less than a decade. Hard-pressed by rising rentals and smaller leases granted under restrictive conditions, the ranching population had decreased annually, until by 1920 only a few large cattle herds remained. This is not to suggest that Grasslands was particularly suited to cereal farming; in fact, the exact opposite is true. Those who farmed found their efforts continually thwarted by an environment marginally endowed for agricultural production. The vagaries of climate and the poverty of the soils forced settlers to choose between adaptation and abandonment. The post-settlement history of Grasslands is, in large measure, a chronicle of responses to the caprices of nature.

Cereal Production

Wheat is an adaptive cereal.[1] It is found in climates ranging from humid to arid. Humid regions usually produce softer wheats with higher yields and lower protein contents. Such wheats are suitable for livestock feed or specialized flours, and are usually sown in autumn and reaped in the following spring. Semi-arid and arid parts of the world, on the other hand, produce wheats with hard kernels and higher protein contents, qualities which make such wheats most desirable for bread-wheat flours. This type of wheat is spring-sown and autumn-harvested. The distinction is an important one, for the wheat-importing nations of the world have always shown a preference for hard, spring wheat. This preference was the key to the development of western Canada's wheat economy. At the start of this century the economy of the West was based on export of that staple, and consequently the economic success of any western region was directly linked to its capacity for wheat production.

Successful cultivation of wheat is dependent upon a number of factors. The length of the growing season, or frost-free period, is vital to the maturity, and therefore to the marketability, of wheat. From about 1870 to 1911 the principal wheat variety grown in western Canada was Red Fife, which required a growing season of 110 days. This made it highly susceptible to early autumn frosts. In 1909 a new strain known as Marquis was introduced which matured earlier and yielded more bushels per acre. Within two years it had replaced Red Fife as the most popular variety in the West. The development of this strain nearly coincided with the settlement of Grasslands, and thus further reduced the risk of frozen kernels in a region where frost was never a serious problem.[2]

More important to the successful production of wheat is the amount of precipitation and its distribution during the growing season. All western Canada may be termed semi-arid, but clearly some areas are drier than others. In Grasslands the mean annual precipitation is 15.2 inches, significantly below the mean for the whole western interior.[3] Some 60 to 70 per cent of this precipitation falls during the growing season.[4] Most of the rainfall occurs in the first half of June, and is followed by a midsummer drought of 35 or more consecutive days. Hot, dessicating winds accompany the drought period, and this intensifies the amount of evapotranspiration, or water loss due to evaporation and transpiration. The region is thus often faced with a moisture deficit which tends to be least severe in the uplands.[5]

Another limiting factor is the nature of the local soils. Since the organic content of soils varies with the amount of vegetative cover, which is related to climate, the poorest soils are found in those areas most subject to drought.[6] Thus, almost half of Grasslands is loam and silt loam, another quarter is heavy clays and clay loams, and the remainder is light-textured sands and loams.[7] This soil distribution is very similar to that of the whole wheat-producing area of the province and therefore it is apparent that in Grasslands wheat productivity is more closely related to precipitation than to soil fertility.[8]

Still another consideration is the local drainage. According to a soil survey of 1931, the Grasslands area,

> is normally excessively drained. That is, except in wet years, supplies of good water for stock are limited; and from a soil moisture standpoint the large proportion of strongly sloping land results in excessive run-off of an already deficient rainfall.[9]

In addition to contributing to excessive drainage, the undulating topography increases the cost of crop production.

The marginality of Grasslands for wheat production may be used as a measure of many things. It indicates in no uncertain terms the desperation of many of the farmers who chose to settle there. It is evidence of the tremendous lack of forethought in official circles which resulted in the drafting of the 1908 Homestead Act. Finally, it is a testimonial to the adaptability of thousands of homesteaders who succeeded in producing wheat in such a hostile environment.

The Nature of Pioneer Agriculture

Agriculture of the homestead period in western Canada was labor-intensive and self-sufficient. These, its most salient characteristics, betray most of all the average homesteader's lack of means. In Grasslands, agriculture retained this primitive status for a relatively long period of time. Ecological factors contributed to its slow development. The climate and soil conditions repeatedly reduced crop yields and this retarded the rate of capital formation. Equally important was the lack of adequate marketing facilities, which cut the profits derived from the export of grain.

Homestead agriculture followed distinct daily and seasonal rhythms. Since most Grasslands homesteaders arrived in early spring, they had to wait until the frost was out of the ground before ploughing. This interval was spent constructing buildings and clearing the land of stones. Stones were particularly bothersome on the uplands and morainic areas.[10] Ploughing sometimes began as early as late April, but more commonly in the second or third week of May. The settler was able to break two and a half or three acres in a day, and this continued until July when the summer heat baked the sod to the point at which it could no longer be easily ploughed. The remainder of summer was spent improving the farmstead, and in the autumn the ploughed acreage was disced. As disc harrows were initially in short supply, they were shared by neighbors.

The walking plough was the homesteader's most indispensable implement. This simple implement, consisting essentially of a steel share for cutting the tough sod and a moldboard for turning away the furrow, was by no means the latest development in farm equipment. It had, in fact, been in use since the mid-19th century and was the precursor of several more advanced implements, most notably the sulky plough.[11] Although some sulky ploughs were used in Grasslands, the walking plough was a pioneer favorite because of its low cost and ease of transport.

The walking plough was usually pulled by a yoke of oxen. Though at times difficult to handle and always slow of pace, oxen were preferred as draught animals because of their relatively low cost.[12] The general demand for horses in western Canada had driven up the price of a good team of horses until it was beyond the reach of fledgling farmers. In the central part of Grasslands, for example, the price of horses rose an incredible 126.7 per cent between 1901 and 1911.[13] Further reducing the relative cost of oxen was their ability to do without grain feed. And of course, oxen could always be butchered for their meat, if circumstances dictated such action.

Owners of oxen followed a peculiar working schedule.[14] The animals were reluctant to work during the heat of the day and this forced the settler to rise at three or four o'clock in the morning if he wished to plough. Work continued until mid-morning, at which time the oxen were turned loose to graze. The settler would occupy himself with other tasks until evening when ploughing would be resumed. Because of such inconveniences, horses were purchased as soon as possible. By 1913 oxen were no longer used in parts of Grasslands.[15] As one writer has noted, "Oxen marked their drivers as freshman farmers; horses were symbols of progress."[16]

In the spring of the second year the first crops were sown. According to Peel, flax was most often seeded on newly broken land because it grew well.[17] Oats was grown as feed for livestock, and it is likely that the acreage sown increased with the number of horses. The number of acres sown to wheat was small because of the difficulty in marketing it. The author of a local history of the Stonehenge district recalled that in the first years of settlement two to ten acres of oats, flax, and a small amount of wheat were sown by hand on each farm.[18]

Various harvesting methods were used. Near Stonehenge the crops were cut by hand with scythes or sickles and then threshed "by hand, foot, horse trampling, rocks or reapers."[19] D. Jacobs of the same district remembered that his first oats crop was "threshed by rubbing the heads in the palm of my hands. It took most of the winter to do three bags."[20] More typical of harvesting in later years is this method described by Elizabeth Ruthig of McCord:

> The crop was cut with a mower, raked into long rows with a horse rake, then tied into bundles by hand. In the nice days, during the winter, the bundles, stored in grainaries [sic] were placed in a wagon box and threshed with a home made flail.[21]

Since little grain was marketed and granaries were in short supply, only enough threshing was done to guarantee a supply of seed grain for the next year. The bulk of the crop, either loose or bundled, would be stacked to prevent rotting and used as livestock feed. When larger acreages were sown, in later years, the co-operative harvesting outfit became common. The farmers of a district pooled their capital, purchased a threshing machine and steam engine, and then moved them from farm to farm according to the maturity of the crops. In some areas, such as Buffalo Horn Valley, harvester gangs from eastern Canada came annually, and each farmer paid to have his crop taken off.[22] In other areas, one farmer possessed enough capital to purchase his own threshing outfit and he would do custom harvesting for the farmers of the district.

Farmers hauled grain to market during the slack winter months, usually with a box and sleigh. Although farm produce prices moved steadily upward, settlers were at first unable to produce quantities sufficient for export. When finally they were able to do so, the distance to market discouraged the sale of grain. The Ruthigs of McCord district, for example, hauled their grain to Vanguard, 50 miles away. The trip usually took three days. When in 1913 a railway was finally built from Moose Jaw to Eastend, the distance to their nearest shipping point was cut by half.[23] The Gordings, living in the southeastern part of Grasslands, recalled hauling their grain to Scobey, Montana, for many years. This not only involved great distances but also the payment of a custom's tariff on every bushel hauled across the International Boundary.[24] There seems no doubt that the inadequacies of the transportation and marketing system retarded agricultural development in Grasslands.

The challenge of weather was as serious as marketing difficulties. As Bruce Peel has written, in a region with a one-crop economy, "weather makes history."[25] Unfortunately the paucity of data on annual weather conditions and crop yields for the period 1908-21 makes analysis of the correlation between weather and yields virtually impossible for the whole area. The most intensive study of this relationship is found in Peel's thesis on the rural municipality of Mankota and this forms the basis for the following discussion.

The first crop in Mankota was harvested in the autumn of 1909. The wheat yield was between 24 and 28 bushels per acre, while oats yielded about 55. This return was sufficient to convince settlers that farming the area was economically feasible.[26] The following year, however, was marked by bad weather and disastrous crop yields. Wheat averaged only ten bushels to the acre. That fall most farmers joined harvester excursions to supplement their meagre incomes. In the spring of the following year many received their first relief seed from the government. The variability of climate was now apparent.[27]

The next few years were prosperous with the exception of 1914.[28] These were the years, it will be remembered, in which frame houses replaced sod and oxen were exchanged for horses. Accompanying the abundant yields were increasing prices due to the outbreak of European war. Then, in 1915, a bumper crop of wheat was harvested. This enabled farmers to easily obtain credit which they used to mechanize their operations and to expand their acreage.[29] At the same time, wheat became the main cash crop of the area.

The period of prosperity was short-lived. Drought conditions struck the southwestern and southcentral areas of Saskatchewan in 1917 and continued through 1920.[30] Wheat yields in Mankota averaged twelve and a half bushels in 1917, dropped to six bushels in 1918 and bottomed out at less than three bushels per acre in 1919. Nineteen-twenty saw a slight recovery to over eight bushels per acre.[31] Lower crop pields meant lower incomes and it became progressively more difficult for farmers to meet their machinery and land debts. Farm labor, in short supply because of the war, also drained farmers' bank accounts, or alternatively, made it impossible to expand acreage. The cumulative impact of these problems created a crisis situation in Grasslands by 1920.

Drylanders?

The effects of drought in Grasslands were worsened by contemporary farming practices. As O.L. Symes explains:

> Up to the mid-1920's prairie farmers were using either the moldboard plow or a disc plow for at least the first operation on their summerfallow. These plows inverted the soil, buried the weeds and stubble, leaving the soil bare and black. With the soil left bare and low rainfall, together with high winds extending over long periods of time, particularly in the spring, the result was a period of dust storms that had never been experienced in this country.[32]

The light-textured soils and lack of vegetative cover in Grasslands exacerbated the problem.

Further aggravating the situation was the bumper crop of 1915.[33] The unprecedented success of the crop induced farmers to expand acreage by cultivating additional submarginal land. The prevailing high winds immediately started soil drifting, which increased after periods of low precipitation. Such conditions prevailed from 1917 to 1920, with the result that many farms were abandoned.

The experience of Grasslands farmers during this extended drought period raises an interesting historiographic question. Various scholars have contended that it was possible to produce grain in semi-arid regions because the past experiences of homesteaders had equipped them with a sound knowledge of dryland farming techniques. George Britnell has perhaps made the most sweeping assertion, that "it was not until Western Canada was able to borrow experience and techniques from the western United States that prairie settlement on an extensive scale was possible."[34] Bruce Proudfoot says of the ranchers of southwestern Saskatchewan: "almost as soon as they had begun operations they were again under pressure from settlers using continually improving dry farming techniques."[35] S.D. Clarke argues that "with the introduction of dryland farming, the area of wheat-producing land was gradually pushed into those semi-arid regions which were formerly considered only fit for ranching."[36]

Several points opposing such a view, at least as it applies to Grasslands, may be noted. It will be recalled that the farmers who settled Grasslands had few alternatives in the way of unsettled farmlands. Even among the alternatives, few areas had soils markedly better than those of southwest central Saskatchewan. Consequently, there is no substance to the argument that without dryland farming techniques, semi-arid regions would not have been farmed. Desperation, more than experience, pushed the frontier into Grasslands. Furthermore, as C.H. Anderson has noted, most Grasslands settlers

> came from areas having high rainfalls and had learned to farm with moldboard plows, discs and harrows in an environment where there was no need to plant early in order to benefit from early spring rains.[37]

The majority of Grasslands settlers, namely eastern Canadians, East Europeans and Scandinavians, fall under this category.

Secondly, the proponents of the dryland view invariably hinge their argument on the presence of knowledgeable American settlers. While Grasslands may well have contained enough Americans to disseminate such knowledge, it can be demonstrated that their knowledge of dryland farming techniques was rather limited, if indeed they had any such knowledge. Mary W.M. Hargreaves, an authority on American dry farming, has stated that,

> Dry farming was very imperfectly understood by the settlers who moved into the semiarid region, roughly identified as the area west of the Missouri River shortly after the turn of the twentieth century.[38]

With few exceptions, experimentation with dryland farming techniques was confined to agricultural scientists and innovative laymen like Hardy Webster Campbell. Results were inconclusive, and although Campbell's method could have made much difference, the Department of Agriculture refused to endorse it as late as 1911.[39] The department went so far as to question the most important of its principles. Confusion with the Federal Department of Agriculture abetted commercial control of dryland propagandizing, with the result that, as Hargreaves states, "the settlers drawn into the region conducted the dry-farming experiment."[40]

If Hargreaves is correct, most American farmers were ignorant of proper dryland farming techniques. But even if she is not right, those Americans who moved to Grasslands, and indeed to all of western Canada, were probably the ones who practiced the worst farming techniques. As stated in an earlier chapter, most American immigrants had been tenant farmers, and this "generated a neglect for the soil."[41] Short leases encouraged soil mining, while the pressure to increase income led to overcropping, and thus to a diminution of soil fertility. This was the experience of most American immigrants.

A final, rather obvious counter-argument is the demonstrated inability of settlers to deal with drought conditions in the Grasslands. Despite the availability of advice from many dryland experts,[42] settlers continued to dissipate stored soil moisture by over-cultivation and made no attempt to prevent soil drifting through the use of tame grasses, shelter-belts and improved cultivation techniques. Not until the government intervention of the next decade would settlers adopt such techniques, and even then the adoption would be a slow process.

Government Intervention

The Dominion Government had always been sympathetic to the plight of grassland farmers. Since 1907 the Department of Agriculture had cushioned the blow of periodic drought with grants of seed grain and money for other farm supplies.[43] In 1917 an Illustration Stations Division was created with the department to decentralize the testing of new agricultural techniques.[44] Between 1915 and 1920 stations were established at Herbert, Maple Creek, Pambrun, Prelate, Shaunavon, Zealandia and Assiniboia.[45] In addition to testing new techniques, these stations disseminated the latest information on farming methods to all farmers who were interested. These efforts by the government, it must be understood, were not simply responses to the drought conditions of the southwest; they were part of a concerted attempt to expand wheat production in western Canada. Only during the extended drought after 1917 did the government recognize the magnitude of their 1908 error.

The severity of the drought and the destitution it brought moved the provincial and the Dominion governments to more deliberate action. In July of 1920 the Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture organized a Better Farming Conference at Swift Current to discuss farming problems in the dry belt.[46] There it was announced that the Dominion Government planned to establish an agricultural research station at Swift Current.[47] Shortly after this conference, the provincial government appointed the Better Farming Commission to inquire into the problems of farming in southwestern Saskatchewan.[48] The commission's report was issued the following year and it recommended enlarging the Agricultural Extension Service staff, establishing more experimental stations, initiating regional soil surveys, and undertaking a community pasture program. While the implementation of these recommendations helped solve the problems of Grasslands agriculture, the work of the Swift Current Experimental Station was to be of paramount importance.

Experimental work commenced at the Swift Current station in the spring of 1922. Under the direction of J.G. Taggart (1921-34) the station's stated aim was to improve the standard of living in Palliser's Triangle by showing farmers that 40 acres of the dry zone could be farmed as cheaply as ten acres in the fertile belt.[49] To this end, research was undertaken on soil samples, new machinery, fertilization, stubble burning, new crop varieties and crop rotation.[50] The results were made known to local farmers and brought about some modification of farming techniques.

The impact of the Swift Current station, while probably of some importance cannot be measured because of the favorable climatic conditions after 1921.[51] To make such an assessment, one would require detailed information on the machinery and techniques used in the area before and after 1922, and this is not available. It is known, however, that in southwestern Saskatchewan during the late 1920s,

> credit was easy to secure and expansion was general. Farms were purchased, farm holdings were enlarged, and power equipment was bought on the assumption that returns would continue to permit contracts to be carried out.[52]

These generalizations are corroborated by the few statistics which are readily available for the period 1921-28.[53] Of the eight rural municipalities in question, five experienced a decrease in the number of farm operators. The average decrease per municipality was 9.76 per cent.[54] In the other three municipalities the average rate of increase in the number of farm operators was 9.78 per cent,[55] suggesting at least the possibility that the area merely underwent a redistribution of population. This contention is reinforced by the fact that the greatest increase came in the municipality of Wise Creek, where the land was comparatively fertile.[56] This is in accord with George Britnell's statement that the size of farms is in direct proportion to the quality of the soil.[57] In Wise Creek, less land was able to support more farmers. During the period 1921-26 the acreage of field crops increased in all but one municipality.[58] Finally, it is significant that spring wheat acreages increased in seven of the eight municipalities.[59] Clearly wheat growing was the central concern of the Grasslands settlers by the 1920s and quite possibly the work of the Swift Current Experimental Station contributed to the apparent feasibility of this new concern.

Conclusion

The Grasslands economy became dependent upon wheat production because of Dominion Government policies which restricted the grazing rights of resident ranchers and simultaneously inundated the area with farm settlers. Still, the climate and soils of the area were marginal for wheat production. Marketing difficulties and an ignorance of proper dryland farming techniques hindered the development of cash reserves among the agrarian population and made it more difficult for them to weather periods of prolonged drought and economic depression. During such periods the Dominion Government was obliged to intervene to save the local population from widespread destitution. The impracticality of repeatedly doing this led to the establishment of the Swift Current Experimental Station, which was expected to solve the problems of farming such a marginal area. The success of the station, combined with a protracted period of favorable weather conditions during the 1920s, contributed to a heavy investment in wheat production. By 1929 the situation was such that only a massive transfer of capital and labor could diversify the economy of Grasslands. The stage was set for a virtually complete economic and social collapse in the next decade.

Note on Sources

As this chapter makes perfectly obvious, the best introduction to the agricultural history of the Grasslands is unquestionably Bruce Peel's masterful "R.M. 45: The Social History of a Rural Municipality," M.A., University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon Campus, 1946, 2 volumes. Although his study is restricted to just one rural municipality of the region, it has application far beyond the political boundaries it investigates. He presents an agricultural history of the municipality year by year, and it is likely that nothing as detailed will ever be available for the remainder of the region. Since climatic and soil conditions do not vary radically throughout the region, Peel's generalizations can probably be extrapolated to cover all of Grasslands.

With respect to the climate of the region, it is well to consult the Monthly Records of Meteorological Observations of the Dominion Department of Marine and Fisheries. These begin in 1916 and provide daily, monthly, and seasonal information on such topics as temperature, relative humidity, precipitation, cloud cover and so on. From these records it would be possible to construct a detailed climatological profile of the region over any given period of time. Also worth consulting are: A.H. Laycock, "Drought Patterns in the Canadian Prairies," in J.G. Nelson (ed.) Weather and Climate (Toronto, 1970), pp. 137-152; W.J. Waines, "Problems of the Drought Area of Western Canada," in H.A. Innis (ed.) Essays in Political Economy in Honour of E.J. Urwick (Toronto, 1938), pp. 205-218; and C.H. Anderson, A History of Soil Erosion by Wind in the Palliser Triangle of Western Canada (Ottawa, 1975).

The contentious issue of how informed settlers were about dryland farming techniques demands resolution. There is no source which deals with either side of the question in any detail. From the Canadian perspective (that is, from the pro side of the argument), the settlers either came equipped with the latest techniques or received them from native experimenters such as Angus McKay of Indian Head. The American viewpoint seems to be that no one understood dryland farming very well, and especially not those settlers who migrated to Canada. One possible way of resolving the issue would involve a detailed investigation of the states of origin of American immigrants who came to Grasslands, their farmer status upon immigrating, and the extent to which dryland techniques were understood in their native states. Another possible source of information might be the files of the Dominion Experimental Station at Swift Current. If it can be shown that proper dryland techniques were practiced in Grasslands prior to the 1920s, no revision of the traditional thesis is needed.

Much attention must be given to agricultural statistics for the period 1908-28. Before 1912 it appears that the only source is the Dominion Census, and this is limited in its usefulness by the vastness of the census divisions of that time. Post-1912 figures may be obtained from the Saskatchewan Department of Municipal Affairs Annual Reports. Since not all rural municipalities in the area had been formed by 1912, there are limitations to this data. For the period after 1921, consult the very useful "Statistical Survey Files" of the Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture, Statistics Branch (housed at AS, Regina).

For an overview of the development of Saskatchewan agriculture, refer to J.R. Bunn, Historical Outline of Agriculture in Saskatchewan as Reflected in Reports of the Department (Regina, 1955).

CHAPTER X RAILWAYS AND SERVICE CENTRES

Introduction

It is an axiom of western Canadian history that the location of railways determined the overall pattern of settlement. Although the chronology of events seems to indicate the opposite, "the railway was not built to reach the population; people settled where it was said a railway would be built, or perchance where it was already being built."[1] This generalization, like so many others, does not always hold up when tested at the local level. In Grasslands, where the variability of crop yields and population created an unstable economy, railway builders exercised a great deal of caution. Their aim was of course profit, not altruism. As a result, the local population was obliged to apply all the pressure at its command in an effort to obtain those transportation facilities which other communities took for granted.

W.A. Mackintosh has written that the railway "closes the circuit through which the power of the world's economic organization flows into the pioneer community."[2] Without rail links to the metropolitan centres of the West and to the markets of the East, no region could advance beyond an economy of subsistence. This was precisely the state in which much of Grasslands population found themselves as late as the 1920s. Those market centres which were utilized were so distant as to give little return on any grain or other produce shipped through them. Thus to Grasslands residents a railway was an economic imperative.

A corollary of railway construction was the rise of service centres. Railways were built principally for the export of grain, and this necessitated the erection of elevators or flat warehouses for grain storage. To make the handling of grain most efficient, elevator 'points' were developed at intervals of approximately ten miles along the track. Businessmen, alert to the advantages of a regular clientele, quickly established small firms which catered to the needs of the agricultural population. These general stores and implement dealers formed the nucleus for rapid commercial development. Soon Grasslands, like every other part of the western interior, was dotted with more towns and villages than its economy could support.

The Politics of Railway Building

Privately owned railways are built to make profits for their owners. They derive most of their revenue from handling and carrying charges imposed on the goods transported. Lacking a steady flow of goods in both directions, no railway can be economically feasible. Thus the desirability of constructing a line between any two points is dependent upon the volume of trade between them.

There were in Grasslands those Edwardian entrepreneurs who refused to bow to such economic commonsense. In 1906 - unquestionably in anticipation of the 1908 Homestead Act - investors incorporated at least two railway companies to serve Grasslands. One was the Regina and Saskatchewan Railway Company,[3] which planned to construct a line from Regina to Willow Bunch and Wood Mountain. The second was the Saskatchewan and Alberta Railway Company,[4] which projected one line from Moose Jaw to the International Boundary and another in a southeasterly direction from Swift Current. It appears that neither company ever laid any track. The less impetuous, more successful older companies did not even consider building lines into the region.[5] Insofar as they did not, they undoubtedly retarded the economic growth of Grasslands. But to say this is only to point out that shrewd railway investors had more foresight than most Dominion government officials.

As every intelligent railway investor knew, prolonged drought periods, accompanied by unstable incomes and population loss, spelled insolvency for ill-conceived branch-lines. Yet the indiscriminant opening of Grasslands led to local demands for branch lines into areas where no line could be an economic success in the long-term. The residents of such areas could not, of course, appreciate the profit motive of the railway executives; they perceived branch lines only in terms of their own marketing needs. The impasse created by these conflicting interests resulted in sustained lobbying of the railway companies by farmers and their representatives.

To illustrate the techniques of a farm lobby, one need look no farther than that organized in the rural municipalities of Waverley and Mankota.[6] In 1915 a group of farmers in Waverley formed the Southwestern Saskatchewan Railway Association as a pressure group concerned with securing a branch line into the area. That it was formed in 1915 comes as no surprise; the bumper crop of that year promised great things for the farmers of the area, if they were able to market the crop. Membership in the association was open to anyone for a fee of one dollar. Additional financial support in the form of an annual grant was received from the municipal council of neighboring Mankota. The implication of this grant, one must assume, was that the branch line would be extended westward into Mankota if possible. To achieve its goal, the Southwestern Saskatchewan Railway Association sent delegates to interview government and railway officials, circulated numerous petitions, and framed resolutions for presentation at various convention meetings. By garnering support in such a manner, the association hoped to pressure the railway into building the line with little delay.

The farmers launched their campaign at a time when the economy of Grasslands was at its peak, probably thinking that this would induce railway executives to build with less hesitation. Working against them was the war which had broken out the previous year. The demands for war materials had brought branch-line construction to an all-time low. Compounding the situation was the beginning of the drought in 1917, which caused a reversal in the local economy and further hindered chances of obtaining a line. Not until 1919 did the Canadian Pacific Railway consider a branch line through the area. A survey was made west of Assiniboia in that year, and the route of the Moose Jaw Southwestern

Railway was projected from Assiniboia to Consul. This plan occasioned a spate of speculation along the proposed route. In the following year, however, the survey line was altered to run through a more densely populated, more productive area along McDonald Creek. But still no construction occurred.

The optimism of the farmers was rekindled when in 1920 the Canadian Pacific Railway started construction from Consul to Val Marie. Although this was the opposite end of the line, the residents of Waverly and Mankota anticipated that the line would continue eastward until it reached Assiniboia. To their chagrin, construction moved very slowly. This provoked them into escalating their campaign. But instead of continuing their lobby against the Canadian Pacific, they turned their attention to a Canadian National line which terminated at Bengough. If this line was extended westward, it would satisfy their needs. And instead of merely petitioning, they enlisted the support of their federal and provincial representatives. In 1922 and 1923 bills were passed in the House of Commons to extend the Bengough line, but no action was ever taken on them. The eastern Canadian Pacific line had, meanwhile, reached Val Marie and stopped.

Seemingly unable to obtain assistance through political channels, the Southwestern Saskatchewan Railway Association turned for advice to George Spence, the member who had been instrumental in obtaining the Consul-Val Marie branch-line. With a singular appreciation of the railway builder's mentality, Spence told the farmers to abandon their petitions and to concentrate instead upon illustrating the economic viability of their desired branch-line. Produce statistics of grain production, he said, present them as a united front, and the companies would listen. As a result of Spence's advice, locals were established from Bengough to Val Marie and a strong central organization was set up to argue the merits of the proposed route. Petitions continued to be presented to other interested groups such as the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, the Association of Rural Municipalities, and the Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association. But still the Canadian National Railway took no action.

Paradoxically, it was the Canadian Pacific which built through the area. The reasons for this decision are unknown, but it may have been a result of the end of depression in mid-1924. Construction began in 1925 and took three years to complete, with the line beginning at Assiniboia and terminating at Mankota.

The completion of the railway in 1928 was, in the words of Bruce Peel, "the fulfillment of a dream."[7] Just what role the Southwestern Saskatchewan Railway Association played in its fulfillment remains unclear. Despite this research hiatus, Peel's case study reveals as nothing else can the importance of a railway to an agrarian community. Representatives of virtually every part of Grasslands campaigned for more than a decade in order to secure a branch line. They carried their case to every influential individual and to every association that would give them a hearing. They gave freely of their time and their money. To those who lived in less remote areas, the railway was an economic benefit; to those who lived in comparative isolation it meant nothing less than economic survival.

Towns and Tracks

Local railways followed the contours of agricultural settlement, and villages and towns arose everywhere along the tracks. The future of these service centres was directly dependent upon the size and wealth of the business clientele they served. Unfortunately it is not possible to follow the fortunes of many centres, since the Dominion census only provides data on those which are incorporated. Nonetheless, it is possible to discuss the relative success of many incorporated service centres. In the three southern rural municipalities, where population density was lowest and the land less fertile, no centre was incorporated until the 1940s. In 1941 the only municipality with any incorporated centres was Mankota, and even there the urban population was only a little over nine per cent of the total.[8] Ten years later the urban population of Mankota had climbed to almost 22 per cent, and in neighboring Waverly the figure had reached 15 per cent. Significantly, in the municipality of Glen McPherson, which was without a railway, there were no incorporated centres even as late as 1956.

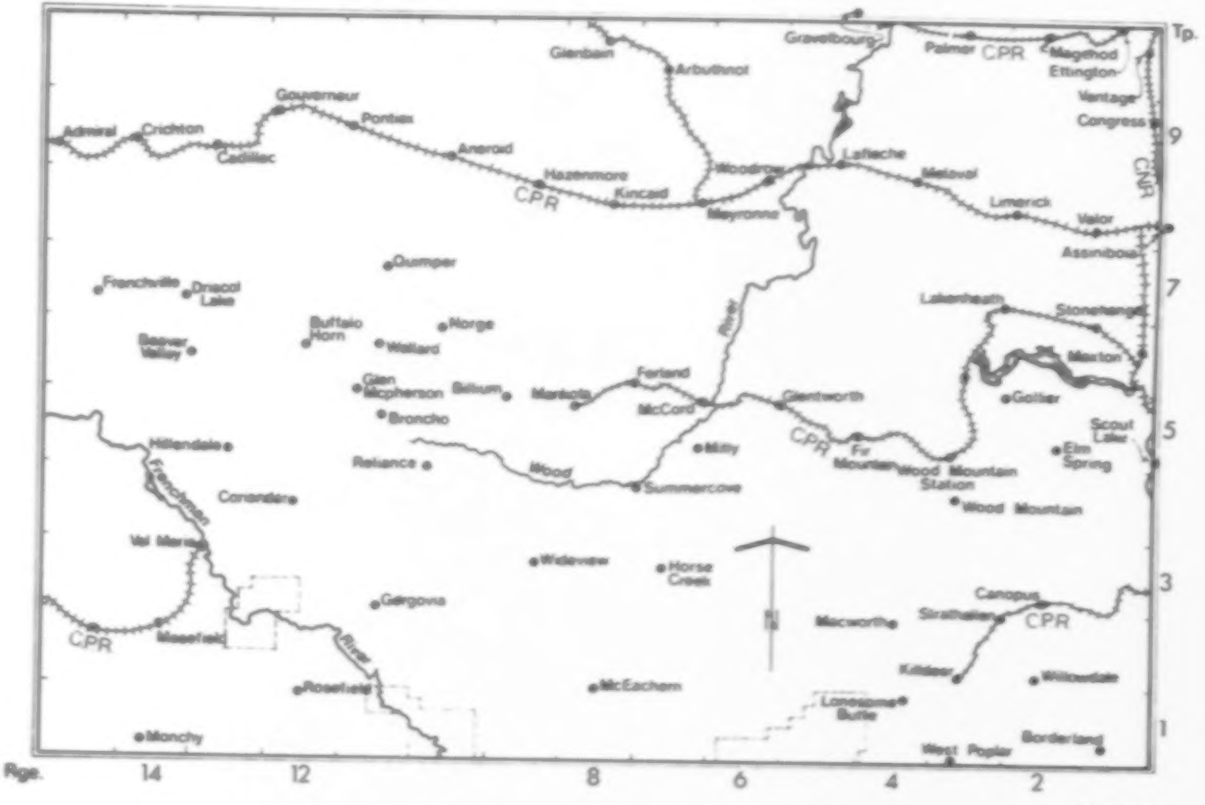
This contrasts sharply with the richer, more populous rural municipalities to the north. These five municipalities were serviced by the Assiniboia-Shaunavon line. By 1926 urban dwellers comprised over one-quarter of the total population in all but one of the municipalities. Within 30 years two of the municipalities, Auvergne and Pinto Creek were urbanized; that is, more than half of their total populations resided in incorporated centres.

With respect to Grasslands as a whole, by 1921 almost 14 per cent of the population lived in villages and towns. Between 1921 and 1931, the peak railway construction period, the urban population increased by more than 30 per cent. Relative to the agrarian population, urban dwellers made up less than 20 per cent of the total population until 1951, when the figure exceeded 25 per cent. Although modified by this urban growth, Grasslands remains a rural area.

Not every village and town in Grasslands was a product of the railway, but it is obvious that few, if any, prospered without a rail connection. This is clearly demonstrated, for instance, by the experience of Ponteix residents. Ponteix was founded as a religious community on the Old Wives River in May, 1908.[9] A Roman Catholic church, some public buildings and numerous private homes were built in later years. In 1914, however, the railway being constructed from Assiniboia to Shaunavon passed half a mile south of the small community, and residents responded by literally moving their entire town to the railway. Today Ponteix is a flourishing centre.[10]

Information on the formation of individual service centres is sparse and this makes generalization difficult. It seems probable, however, that speculation was rife at most town sites. At Assiniboia, for example, an entire town of some 980 lots was 'built' on paper within less than a year of the announcement that a rail line would pass through the site.[11] These lots were sold at Moose Jaw. The selling is described in a local history of the community:

> Would-be merchants and businessmen were active in procuring their chosen location in town and by January 16, 1913, all lots in the first survey were sold. Indeed the sale of lots and property was not confined to the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Arbuthnot
Gouverneur
Pontex
Admiral
Crichton
Cadillac
Aneroid
Hazenmore
Kincaid
Woodrow
Meyronne
Lafleche
Meluval
Limerick
Valor
Assiniboia
Dumper
Frenchville
Dracol Lake
Buffalo Horn
Norge
Beaver Valley
Wallard
Glen Mcpherson
Billium
Mankota
Ferland
Broncho
McCord
Glentworth
Lakenheath
Stonehenge
Maxton
Gollier
Scout Lake
Elm Spring
Hillandale
Reliance
Milly
Fir Mountain
Wood Mountain Station
Wood Mountain
Summercove
Coriander
Val Marie
Wideview
Horse Creek
Gergovia
Canopus
Macworth
Strathallen
Killdeer
Willowdale
Mccfield
Rosefield
McEachern
Lonesome Butte
Monchy
West Poplar
Borderland
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FIG. 16 Towns, Villages, and Railways in the Park Area

1/2" = 6mi.

> section selection as the townsite, but extended out to adjacent farm lands ... The boom was on and investors from near and far were inveigled into buying lots which sometimes were found to be most of a mile from the center of town. Many such lots were later exchanged for lots 'nearer in' and the would-be city lots reverted to farm lands. Such lands, having changed hands at from one to four hundred dollars per acre, proved that they were capable of producing wheat equally as well [as] $20.00 to $40.00 per acre land - ten miles from town.[12]

The exorbitant prices which businessmen were willing to pay for a town lot is one of the surest indicators of the region's desperate need for less distant service centres.

Urban Government

The service centre in Grasslands, like service centres everywhere, was beset with peculiar problems. The concentration of population fostered widespread public concern with issues such as fire protection, sanitation, and domestic animals running at large.[13] Such concerns were dealt with through the organization of local government.

The nature of the local government established in an urban centre depended upon the size of its population. The smallest settlements were known as hamlets, and because they required the least regulation they were usually governed by the council of the rural municipality in which they were located.[14] A hamlet could be organized, however, and in such cases there existed a local board which made recommendations to the municipal council on required services and their costs. The decision to take action on a particular issue still remained with the rural municipal council.

As the population of a centre increased to more than 100 persons, its citizens could petition the minister of municipal affairs to grant it village status.[15] Upon receiving this approval, the village's property owners elected a village council, usually consisting of three members, one of whom came up for election each year. One of the councillors was chosen by his peers to act as overseer.

The same procedure was followed when a village became eligible for town status, except that a mayor and councillors were elected. In both villages and towns the revenues required for general improvements were raised principally through real property taxation. Periodically all property in the centre was assessed by a council-appointed assessor and taxed according to its assessed value. Certain types of real property were exempt from taxation, including schools, churches, government property, cemeteries, hospitals, and so forth. Additional revenues might be generated through licence fees, tax sales, debentures, and provincial grants.

The Service Centre Hierarchy

External service centres have always dominated the Grasslands area, although clearly certain districts have been more disadvantaged than others. To obtain supplies, homesteaders would travel several times each year to commercial centres on the Canadian Pacific mainline, like Moose Jaw and Swift Current. Similarly long trips would be made to market grain during the winter months. In fact, to obtain any manufactured goods or specialized service like medical care, the settler was forced to travel considerable distances. This situation changed with the construction of local railways after 1912, for townsites developed as quickly as the tracks were laid. Geographical advantages and interurban rivalry worked to establish an intra-Grasslands sub-metropolitan net, linked to older metropoles by the railways.

Sub-metropolitan centres may be classified according to the number of services they provide. Leo F. Kristjanson, an authority on Saskatchewan's service centres, has developed the following classification system:[16]

Village	2 to 10 services
Village-Town	11 to 25 services
Town	26 to 50 services
Greater Town	51 to 100 services

Using Kristjanson's classification scheme and 1961 data, Assiniboia and Gravelbourg were the only Greater Towns which serviced the Grasslands area and both were geographically on the periphery of the area. Their mutual success would seem to indicate the advantages of early settlement, reinforcement of initial metropole status by railway connections, and a hinterland with above average production capabilities. Of the five Towns in the area,[17] all are located on railways. Two of them, Mankota and Val Marie, have the benefit of comparative isolation which reduces the amount of inter-town commercial competition. While it seems likely that the Towns will not expand further, one can predict that they will remain stable as long as their hinterlands experience no violent fluctuations in population or agricultural production. Rockglen is Grasslands' only Village-Town, a position it probably owes to the absence of competition in the southeastern corner of the area and to the low agricultural capability of its hinterland. By far the greatest number of service centres in Grasslands are villages of 100 to 200 people. They exist by virtue of their grain elevators and post offices.

Conclusion

The locations of Grasslands' railways say as much about the myopia of government officials as they do about the shrewdness of railway builders. The Assiniboia-Shaunavon line, Grasslands' first and most important railway, was constructed through the most densely populated and most agriculturally productive part of the area. No other lines were built until the mid-1920s when favorable climatic conditions ensured above average quantities of grain for export. Significantly, these lines either skirted the area, as in the case of the Rockglen-Killdeer spur, or followed a digressive path through grain-producing districts, as in the case of the Assiniboia-Mankota line. The railway builders, unlike the government's policy makers of 1908, paid attention to the agricultural capabilities of the various districts in Grasslands, with the result that marginally productive districts never secured rail connections. Had government officials done so in 1908, much of the Grasslands area would have remained rangeland.

The coming of railways expedited the development of a viable market economy in Grasslands. Because of lower marketing costs, farmers were able to build up greater cash reserves from their crop receipts, reserves which were used to expand farm operations. The resultant economies of scale assisted local economic progress and promoted growth in the many service centres which accompanied the railways.

Note on Sources

The single most important source of information of individual service centres is the local newspaper. In those cases where a newspaper has been published continuously since the founding of the town, the researcher will find that nearly every detail of civic development is chronicled in one source. The task, and it is an enormous one, is to sift through this mountain of material and organize it to best advantage. The most foolproof method is to prepare a comprehensive list of the topics one wishes to investigate and then to work through the newspaper page by page, year by year, noting every reference to those topics. In this way a fairly complete skeleton history of any community may be assembled. A list of the newspapers published in the Grasslands area is provided in Appendix I. To find out whether or not copies are extant, consult the Saskatchewan Archives Board at Regina or Saskatoon.

Often published local histories and unpublished personal reminiscences can be utilized to flesh out the skeleton history obtained by working with a weekly newspaper. Such materials can be found for any community by consulting the card catalogues at the Saskatoon or Regina Archives Board Office. This is another area in which oral history could potentially be of great assistance.

With respect to population figures for service centres, one must begin with the Census of Canada and the quinquennial censuses of the prairie provinces. Unfortunately these sources only provide data for incorporated centres. For more information on these and unincorporated centres, consult the "Files relating to individual local government units, titled according to the present name and form of unit," kept at the Legislative Buildings, Regina. Further information on unincorporated centres is provided by an anonymous source in the Murray Library at Saskatoon, entitled "Saskatchewan: Population of Unincorporated Places, less than 50 persons, 1956 and 1961." To place the demographic development of a service centre in a broader context, consult M.L. Szabo Demographic Trends in Saskatchewan, 1921-1959

(Regina, 1962), and AS (Regina) Pamphlet File: Population: Saskatchewan, Royal Commission on Taxation; "Population Trends in Saskatchewan, 1901-1972."

The question of urban local government may be examined by consulting the "Files relating to individual government units..." cited above. There may also be references in the personal papers of the various ministers of municipal affairs. Regarding the origins of urban local government in the province, see A.N. Reid's three articles: "Local Government in the North-West Territories: The Villages," *Saskatchewan History*, 4:2 (1951), 41-56; "Urban Municipalities in the North-West Territories: Their Development and Machinery of Government," *Saskatchewan History*, 9:2 (1957), 41-61; and "Functions of Urban Municipalities in the North-West Territories: Public Works and Public Utilities," *Saskatchewan History*, 10:3 (1958), 81-96. See also the discussion of sources in the following chapter.

Information on the provision of important urban amenities such as regular mail service, electrical power, and telephones may be obtained in various ways. Mail service can be studied through the annual reports of the Postmaster-General of Canada, found in the Sessional Papers. Material will be found on the founding dates of each post office in the district and the town, its postmaster, the volume of mail handled, the annual postal receipts and expenditures, and so on. This information may be used to construct a history of mail service in an area, but it may also be employed in a discussion of business trends. The history of electrical service in a community may be studied through the Saskatchewan Power Corporation archives at Regina and through the annual reports of the Minister of Public Works. Telephone service can be researched by resorting to ministerial papers as well.

The history of railways is another gigantic undertaking and one would do well to begin with Robert Dorman's *A Statutory History of the Steam and Electric Railways of Canada, 1836-1937* (Ottawa, 1938). From the information obtained there, one is able to work quickly through the Statutes of Canada for information on company stockholders, projected routes, capital costs and so on. Since the railways in Grasslands are the property of the Canadian Pacific Railway, one must utilize that company's archive at Calgary where more complete details of railway building can surely be obtained.

The impracticality of working with local newspapers in the preparation of this chapter has resulted in a very cursory examination of the relationship between railways and service centres and the effects of service centres upon the Grasslands area. There are many questions which have not even been raised here, let alone answered, such as the nature of civic politics, the social layering within each community, the impact of the automobile upon trading patterns, and so forth. These questions and many others must be addressed if an understanding of urban life is to be achieved.

CHAPTER XI THE ORGANIZATIONAL SOCIETY

Introduction

Every society is knit together with the sinews of organization. For the sake of clarity, organizations are usually divided into the categories of informal and formal. An informal organization is often created on an *ad hoc* basis to serve some short-term need or desire, and is thus characterized by impermanence. Membership is most often open and fluid. A formal organization, by contrast, is one which involves a specific and sometimes restricted membership which meets regularly, is governed by a definite set of rules, and is concerned with a particular long-term goal.

To the historian, informal organizations are most important for what they reveal about the character of local society. The quilting bees, summer picnics, sporting tournaments, harvesting crews, card parties and dances mentioned in previous chapters all point to the conclusion that the Grasslands community, like all farming communities of the western interior, was initially one of close bonds and co-operation. Because such activities are the stuff of everyday life, records of them are not numerous and therefore informal organizations do not lend themselves to intensive organization.

To a large degree formal organizations also reveal this sense of initial community co-operation, but at the same time they provide insight into the relationship of local society to the larger world. However, because it is usually the case that each formal organization is the vehicle of expression for one strong opinion or belief at a time, the records and recollections of such bodies present only a string of unconnected vignettes about the society. It is the purpose of this chapter to arrange these vignettes into a composite sketch of Grasslands society, and to relate that sketch to the people's heritage, contemporary situation, and aspirations.

Cultural Tranplantation

Each homesteader bore the stamp of his former home. All the impressions and activities of childhood and adolescence combined to give each settler a distinctive world view. This world view was reinforced by the cultural segmentation of the Grasslands population. But regardless of the diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds of the settlers, all fully expected to reestablish civilization as they knew it upon the culturally barren prairie. In this they were remarkably successful and their traditions became the foundation upon which Grasslands society was built.

Religious institutions preceded all others in the area. As early as the winter of 1870-71 an Oblate missionary, Père Lestanc, was proselytizing the Métis of Wood Mountain.[1] A mission was built at Wood Mountain, but this was later moved to a site near Willow Bunch. This solitary mission was the precursor of extensive Roman Catholic activity in Grasslands.

It was not until after the turn of the century that Catholicism had a significant impact upon the area. In 1906 a young priest from New York, Father Louis-Pierre Gravel, was called upon by Bishop Langevin of St. Boniface to establish a new parish in southern Saskatchewan.[2] Because young Gravel had political connections in Ottawa, he was named a colonization agent and was commissioned to obtain four townships for the purpose of starting a *Canadien* colony.[3] In March of 1908 the Dominion Government erected a post office at the colony site, and named it Gravelbourg.

Québecois had for years been emigrating to the United States in search of land and occupational opportunities. The Catholic Church was alarmed by this threat to the French religion, language, and culture, and colonization projects such as Gravelbourg were seen as part of the solution. Significantly, the appeals which were made to the Quebec expatriates were in part appeals to tradition and cultural preservation. The following excerpt from a magazine article was typical:

> Hâtez-vous, Canadiens de vous empareer du soil Canadien! Pourquoi aller tenter fortune aux États-Unis quand les Américains eux-mêmes viennent la chercher chez nous? En ce moment, pendant qu'il en est temps encore, je vous adresse un appel suprême! Venez grossir les rangs dans le Sud de la Saskatchewan. Vous trouverez là des compatriotess, des coréligionnaires qui seront heureux de vous recevoir et de s'unir à vous pour assurer à notre race une influence prédominante dans la Saskatchewan.[4]

Land was unquestionably a strong attraction to the many landless Québecois, but it would be wrong to underestimate the importance which they placed upon residing in a distinctively French colony.

As Gravel's colonization project attracted more and more settlers, the geographical spread of settlement resulted in a decentralization of religious institutions. Meyronne, for example, had a resident priest as early as 1909, and it is revealing that this priest had been persuaded by local residents to come from France to serve their parish.[5] In 1910, when a group of French settlers arrived at Gravelbourg, Father Gravel entrusted them to the care of a priest at Swift Current, who soon settled them three or four miles north of the present town of Val Marie.[6] Another parish was begun. This was the pattern which resulted from the energies of Father Gravel; incoming settlers were directed to available farmlands and a priest was appointed to minister to their needs, with the result that much of Grasslands became distinctly French.

The Protestants, being of several denominations, lacked the centralization of the Roman Catholics. As such, they made far greater use of the itinerant preacher. Peel has recorded that in central Grasslands, the Presbyterians were most active in this regard.[7] Typically, the missionary would rise early on Sunday, travel to the nearest area of Protestant settlement, and preach his first sermon of the day. The service might be conducted in someone's rude shack, or in a field if the weather was good and the congregation large. When the first service was over, the preacher would move on to the next gathering of Protestants. This activity was repeated perhaps three or four times each Sunday, so as to reach the greatest number of people. And, as Peel has pointed out, attendance was usually large, for the service was a social occasion as well.[8]

Such services were open to all Protestants, regardless of denomination. This was a pragmatic solution to the chronic shortage of clergy, and thus Grasslands settlers, like so many others across the western interior, participated in union services long before the union was blessed by the church hierarchies. Despite this co-operative spirit, differences did arise on religious grounds. Some time after the congregation at Milly decided in 1912 to construct a church, a feud erupted between Presbyterians and Methodists. The sod church was already partly built when the question of a name for it was raised. The Presbyterians wished to call it the First Presbyterian Church, but the Methodists were almost as numerous and they objected strenuously. A stalemate resulted, and the church was never completed.[9] Such altercations were probably rare, for when a vote was taken on church union the local Protestants approved the union almost unanimously.[10] Grasslands was also home to several Protestant sects. One which was very active in the Mankota district around 1913 was the Holiness Movement Congregation, or Hornerites as they were commonly called.[11]

This group was most notable for its annual camp meeting which involved eight consecutive days of prayer and services. Myrtle Moorhouse recalled an evangelist who came to the Buffalo Horn Valley district "to save all souls in their own style."[12] Every evening services were held with a great deal of "whooping and singing, praying and testifying" and every evening the crowds grew larger.[13] There were probably other sects in the area as well, but of these no record has yet been found.

The rapidity with which religious institutions were erected attests to the importance of religion in the lives of these people. Every district in the area had a rural church within a couple of years of the beginning of settlement, and often sooner. When a service centre arose along a railway branch-line, a new church was invariably one of the first buildings constructed. Further evidence is supplied by the size and beauty of some churches, particularly those of the Roman Catholics. One of the earliest to be built, and by all measures the most magnificent, was the Cathedral St. Philomene constructed at Gravelbourg in 1918-19.[14] Seating over 1500 worshippers,

> the rise of its roof cuts into two stories, less the bay of the transcepts which stands upright and gives it an appearance of ease and good bearing without removing any of its aspect of solidity. The exterior as well as the interior is of Roman style with Italian Renaissance ... A superb stained-glass window, which adorns the main entrance, in day-time radiates with all its sunny fires, a marvellous Sacred Heart ... The section of the larger nave is lined by octagon pillars which rise in an immaculate whiteness up to the cornices which support the vault of the pinnacle. To break the somewhat severe monotony of these cornices which are also white, at

> either side in front of the nave, little arches jut out all adorned with seraphs. The nave of the sanctuary is divided into seven sections [which] form as many panels on which are painted immense tableaux, the masterpieces of Father Maillard.[15]

While none can match the splendour of the cathedral, there are several other impressive structures such as the twin-spired Eglise de Notre-Dame D'Auvergne at Ponteix and the spacious Laflèche church with its impressive gothic lines.

The teaching institutions of the Catholic Church are likewise indicative of the special place of the church. These include the Precious Blood Monastery at Gravelbourg, the Mazenod Seminary, and the Couvent des RRSS de l'Assomption at Val Marie. From these and other local institutions have come many of the priests and nuns who have served the area over the years.[16]

Religion and daily life were always intertwined in Grasslands. In the homesteading period the church service itself was a social occasion. As settlement progressed and transportation improved, the settlers started numerous formal organizations which combined religion and socializing. The most prominent of these were the various ladies' auxiliaries to the church, which could be found in nearly every community. The Melaval Women's Auxiliary may be taken as typical. Formed in 1914 "in a little log shack on a farm,"[17] its stated purpose was to aid in church and community work. Numerous picnics, box socials, and fowl suppers were held in an effort to raise funds. As a result many improvements were made to the Melaval church and much new equipment was purchased.

The enthusiasm and dedication with which Grasslands residents approached religious activities attest to the significance of this part of their lives. They were unwilling to abandon their spiritual traditions despite the obstacles of distance, lack of funds, and lack of clergy. As such, the foundation of this prairie society had religion as its cornerstone.

School and Church

Educational facilities ranked high on the settler's list of priorities. If a school was not built for several years after settlement began, it was usually because there were insufficient children in the district or because of opposition from district bachelors who were naturally averse to school taxes. Seldom, it appears, was a school not built because of indifference to education. This general concern with education was predicated upon tradition. Over the years, however, the school was variously seen as the guardian of cultural values, as an assimilatory mechanism, and as a means of gaining acceptance in a new society. The viewpoint depended upon the ethnicity of its proponent. Given the disparities among these views, few settlers could afford to ignore the educational process.

The legal establishment of a school district was a simple matter.[18] As long as a district contained at least ten children between the ages of 5 and 16, the ratepayers of the district could form an organizing committee. This committee would petition the Department of Education for permission to establish a school district. The petition was accompanied by a map of the proposed school district showing the number of children, the names of district residents, and the location of roads, creeks and other physical features. Upon receiving permission from the department, the organizing committee would call a ratepayers' meeting to discuss the proposal. A vote would be taken, and if a majority was in favor of forming a school district, a board of trustees would be elected. It then remained for the trustees to notify the department and to publish an announcement of the district formation in the Saskatchewan *Gazette*.

The first organized school districts were of course in the countryside. While the legal obstacles to formation were few, local conditions sometimes interfered. In the Buffalo Horn district, for instance, there were by 1913 enough school-age children and interested parents to form a district.[19] At the same time the majority of settlers in the district were bachelors who would not agree to such a proposal because they would be taxed like any family with children. Organizational meetings were held at intervals, but the bachelors always voted against formation. Most of the bachelors, however, returned to eastern Canada after harvest and consequently it was then that the remaining settlers formed the school district. Upon returning in the spring, the bachelors found that there was nothing to do but accept the situation. Despite such obstacles to formation, it seems that by the start of the Great War most of the area's rural school districts were formed.

School districts were, from the start, plagued with problems. Some were the result of the harsh climate. It was often difficult to obtain a clean supply of water for the school children, and consequently settlers regularly hauled water to the schoolhouse by the barrelful.[20] Heating the school during the winter months presented a more distressing problem, since fuel was so scarce. The way in which this problem was met is not entirely clear, but it is possible that schools were closed during the coldest months and then remained open for much of the summer. This was the case at Milly School, for example.[21]

There were two other common problems for which solutions could not be so easily found. One was the inadequacy of school libraries. Libraries in rural schools appear to have been given little assistance by the Department of Education and local revenues were insufficient to equip the schools satisfactorily. Another problem was the lack of qualified teachers. There were few attractions in Grasslands, least of all the salaries paid to teachers. This problem was magnified by the fact that many teachers were young, single, and female, and the high proportion of bachelors took its toll.

Operating difficulties such as these could be remedied by increasing local revenues. This became possible partly because continuing settlement multiplied the local tax base. In addition, changing attitudes contributed to a heightened awareness of the importance of education and provincial grants increased accordingly.[22] But education in the Grasslands area was also afflicted with a serious problem which higher revenues could not eliminate. Because of the area's ethnic composition, the provincial debate on languages of education caused disruption in many school districts and contributed to a polarization of local society.

The language question had a lengthy history by the time Grasslands was settled.[23] Until the 1880s education in the Northwest Territories was not centrally administered. When school grants were first given by the territorial government in 1881, no distinction was drawn on the basis of language or religion. Over the years this duality was gradually eroded in favor of English-speaking residents. By 1894 the administration of schools was almost entirely English-speaking and Protestant. Minor gains were secured by the French and other minority groups in succeeding years, but overall their status remained subordinate. Considerable debate was generated over the Autonomy Bills of 1905, with the result that the separate school system was guaranteed. This placated the French to some extent, but rising foreign immigration to the province and increasing English concerns about being inundated by 'aliens' renewed the controversy which was to rage for decades.

In the following decade French and English expressed their differences through formal organizations. The Orange Lodge and the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association unsurprisingly favored the suppression of French in schools, while groups such as L'Association Catholique Franco-Canadienne attempted to rebuff the attack. The restrictive legislation passed by Manitoba and Ontario in 1916 and the conscription crisis of the following year worsened an already unsavoury situation. But in Saskatchewan the fate of the French language in schools remained in limbo, for political leaders were invariably compelled to tread the fine line between principle and political pragmatism. Some concessions were made to the French, usually large enough to appease them while small enough not to provoke too much English backlash.

At the local level the ongoing debate was especially malignant. Often it set neighbor against neighbor in acrimonious dialogue. Bruce Peel recorded that in Mankota municipality families sometimes appealed to school boards to be included in another school district because they opposed the language of instruction in their own.[24] When the Ku Klux Klan brought its message of Protestant supremacy to Saskatchewan in 1926, the local situations sometimes became terrifying. Myrtle Moorhouse recalled some of the Klan's activities at Ponteix, a major Catholic centre:

> In 1927 a new United Church Minister and his wife and wee son aged five and named Allanby ... came to Ponteix. Rev. and Mrs. Bouchard were both born French, but their religion was United Church. At this time a Frenchman was supposed to be Roman Catholic, so they met with lots of resentment from French residents ... Two years later, Allanby was old enough to go to school and he attended the public school named in honor of Father Royer. The school was adorned with symbols of the Roman Catholic Church, and Allanby's teacher was Catholic. His punishment for a disobedient child was to make him bow before a cross and ask God's forgiveness. When this happened to Allanby and he returned home to report, Rev. Bouchard took it to the school board and the [United] Church board, the board which belonged to the Ku Klux Klan. They all broke into the school one night and smashed all religious symbols beyond redemption, which caused a real war...[25]

On another occasion, members of the Klan in Ponteix,

> stole one of the four crosses Father Royer had installed several years before ... They ... decided they would burn it on the streets of Ponteix; crowds gathered to see the fray, the Catholics to defend, and the Klan (which were otherwise our peaceful neighbours) to agitate, and they fully intended to carry it out. However, when they saw that bloodshed was sure to follow, they finally backed down.[26]

These, the actions of a vociferous minority in a town of 500 people, demonstrate as nothing else can the intensity of feeling which divided 'otherwise peaceful neighbors'. They were of course exaggerated examples of the ethnocentrism these people possessed, yet it must be remembered that they do reflect the determination of the settlers to establish and preserve their own cultural identity in a new region. Formal organizations were unquestionably seen as most conducive to the achievement of such an objective.

Changing Expectations

Tradition motivated the residents of Grasslands to hurriedly organize formal religious and education institutions. Thus anchored in the familiar, residents must have experienced a sense of triumph over the area which was now their home. They had succeeded in re-establishing the social bulwarks of their past. But changing expectations among residents presented challenges which could not be met by appeal to precedent. The organization of rural telephone companies and union hospitals, which may be taken as exemplifying such challenges, were handled according to provincial government guidelines. These guidelines supplied direction, but only co-operation among neighbors could ensure success.

Saskatchewan's rural telephone system is the only one of its kind in Canada.[27] While the province owns and operates urban and long-distance telephone services, rural companies are the responsibility of their subscribers. The main features of this policy were laid down in the Telephone Act of 1908.[28] While passage of this act coincided with the settlement of Grasslands, it is doubtful that the settlers' meagre capital resources permitted the establishment of any telephone companies. This contention is supported by the fact that the development of rural companies was slow even among older municipalities. The main reason for the delay was the 1908 provision that the capital of a telephone company had to be fully paid up before the government would offer any construction assistance. Recognizing this obstacle, the government repealed the 1908 law in 1913, and new legislation was introduced which permitted the issuance of debentures to meet capitalization costs. In much of the province, rural telephone companies were incorporated rapidly, but growth in Grasslands was retarded by poor crop returns. Such projects first became feasible in Grasslands after the bumper crop of 1915.[29]

The organization of all telephone companies was governed by provincial statute. Five or more persons in a municipality might petition the Minister of Telephones for permission to begin a company. The capital cost was not to exceed ten dollars for each pole-mile constructed and no subscriber could hold more than four shares, which were to be valued at five dollars each. Capital could be raised through loans or debentures, but not more than $350.00 per mile could be borrowed. This loan capital and the interest thereon was repaid by taxes levied on each quarter-section adjacent to the telephone line. That these requirements were impossible to meet without community co-operation is obvious.

The establishment of a union hospital, such as the one at Assiniboia,[30] provides another example of the community meeting new expectations through co-operation. In 1915 the province passed the Union Hospital Act[31] which permitted two or more adjacent rural municipalities to establish a hospital. Three years later the act was amended to permit nonadjacent municipalities to participate. All taxable property within the designated area was assessed a hospital tax at the rate of two mills on the dollar for the support and equipping of the hospital. Each municipality collected its taxes and forwarded them to the hospital board, consisting of two representatives of each participating municipality. In this manner the provision of medical care was made more equitable and the problem of distance from major medical centres solved.

The Government of Saskatchewan provided for similar local co-operative action with respect to hail insurance, drainage taxes, and other rural problems. Preliminary research has not revealed that such schemes were tried in Grasslands, but this does not of course preclude the possibility of their operation. In any case the details of these projects are not as important as the insight which they provide into the nature of Grasslands society. They reveal the importance of the formal organization as a vehicle for community improvement and as a vital link between local society and the wider world.

Agrarian Protest

Many formal organizations in Grasslands resulted from the agrarian protest movement of the early 20th century. Farmers, dissatisfied with western Canada's unenviable economic role in Confederation, expressed their discontent through organizations like the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, the Farmers Union of Canada and the United Farmers of Canada, among others. Locals of many such organizations were common throughout Grasslands. Like so many other community groups, they served more than one purpose. First, they expressed the grievances of the farmers. Second, they functioned as social gatherings which promoted the type of co-operation which had existed among farmers during the homestead period. And third, they informed the larger society about the especially difficult circumstances which often existed in the drought-ridden part of Saskatchewan.

The movement which became the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association arose before the Grasslands area was settled. By 1900 discontent was widespread about the shipping and handling of grain, which was principally controlled by the Canadian Pacific Railway and a few line-elevator companies. Agitation from western farmers resulted in the appointment of a royal commission to investigate the problem. Although the report of the commission was favorable to the farmers, it soon became clear that the railway and elevator companies were not following its recommendations. Consequently in 1901 the farmers organized themselves into the Territorial Grain Growers' Association. When Saskatchewan became a province in 1905 the prefix of the name was changed accordingly.

The Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association was extremely active in promoting the farmers' cause. It campaigned for better elevator service, and formed its own company, the Grain Growers' Grain Company, to meet this end. It pressured for further royal commissions into the grain trade, and got them.[32] It worked closely with Saskatchewan's various Liberal administrations between 1905 and 1929[33] and was instrumental in giving the party a decidedly agrarian outlook. The list could be extended, but the point remains that for the first time the farmers of Grasslands had a powerful lobby actively working for their interests.[34] And, if locals are any index, Grasslands farmers responded to the lobby with enthusiasm. In 1917, the only year for which such records exist, there were forty locals of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association in the area.[35] Included among these were five Women's Grain Growers' Associations.[36]

Little information is extant on most of these forty locals of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, but Bruce Peel has written a brief history of local activity in the municipality of Mankota.[37] The first local was organized at Milly in 1914, and shortly thereafter others were formed at Summercove and in Mankota district. Peel claims that these locals were instrumental in persuading the association executive to promote local branch-line construction. During the drought years after 1917 the locals gathered information on drought conditions and helped distribute relief clothing. Other activities included the purchase of farm supplies which were sold to members at reduced prices, and the formation of a wheat pool in 1923-24.

Peel suggests that after 1923 "interest in the grain growers' locals declined" because their goals had been achieved.[38] Whether or not this was the case among other locals is unclear, for not enough is known about them. Some information is available in the form of Women's Grain Growers' Association annual questionnaires for the years 1922 and 1923,[39] and this leads one to accept Peel's conclusion that interest declined, but not, however, because the movement's goals had been realized.

From the sparse information contained in these questionnaires, one comes to the following conclusions. Despite reasonably good attendance at local meetings, the activity of each local seems to have been confined to community assistance projects. Men seldom participated in the meetings, although joint winter meetings were recommended by the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association central. Similarly, district youth were seldom active in the movement. Furthermore, it appears that few farmers in any of the districts represented subscribed to the *Progressive*, an influential farm journal of the time. And few were active in sponsoring the formation of a wheat pool, for which the Saskatchewan association was actively campaigning at the time. Finally, the locals did not send delegates to the district conventions, and they had little if any input into the association's decisions.

This rather bleak picture contrasts sharply with the initial enthusiasm which seems to have swept the area. But the reasons for the apathy and inaction are not difficult to find. In the North Admiral WGGA local, one of the problems was competition from other community clubs. The annual report of 1923 read:

> Am sorry to have to tell you that I fear our GGA will not hold together another year although we are doing all we can to keep it going.
>
> The Ladies' Aid in our district has taken a very selfish streak and are doing all they can to break up our club owing to a little jealousy.[40]

In the same report was the following reference to the organization of a wheat pool local:

> One of our members tried to get signers for the Wheat Pool, but only got five as the farmers in this district have had so many backsets [sic] that they have to have every cent they can possibly get out of their crop as soon as they can get [it] thrashed.[41]

The same economic problems arising from the lingering post-war depression and only moderate crop returns resulted in this comment from the Valor Women's Grain Growers' Association:

> Am sorry to send in such a report, as it does not look very good but we are handicapt [sic] here as we have no hall, no place to meet or have social gatherings and when we have no place for gatherings of any kind we can't make any money ... We tried our best last year [1921] to go ahead with a hall but the Men's Local seems to be dead and we can't do it alone. We are not sending a delegate to [the] convention this year as we have no funds.[42]

If these reports are representative, and at present there seems no way of determining this, then it would seem that the lack of interest shown by Grasslands locals after 1923 was more the result of economic stringency than realization of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association goals. Unfortunately there is very little extant information on the participation of the local population in the groups which succeeded this association in the 1920s, namely the Farmers' Union of Canada and the United Farmers.

Local Government

The final type of formal organization which will be considered here is the purely functional organization which is imposed upon local society from without. The best example of this is the rural municipal council, whose activities and powers are in the main set down by the provincial government. The council is perhaps the closest bond between local society and the larger community because it involves so many spheres of activity and is generally permanent.

Under the British North America Act of 1867, the provinces were given exclusive power to make laws concerning municipal institutions. "Accordingly," one writer has commented, "every municipal institution in this province [Saskatchewan] is the creation of the Provincial

Legislature, and every power exercised by a municipality was delegated to it by the Provincial Legislature."[43] Before Saskatchewan became a province in 1905, these same powers were vested in the territorial government and all municipal affairs were administered by the Territorial Department of Public Works.[44] Provision for the establishment of municipalities was first made in the Municipal Ordinances of 1883, and the period up to 1898 has been described as one of trial and error.[45] Various organizational schemes were tried, but few rural municipalities were actually formed. In essence, it was a case of administrative costs outweighing the benefits to be derived from organization. A.N. Reid, an authority on local government in the territorial period, notes that municipal organization was not particularly advantageous until agricultural development boomed at the turn of the century.[46]

At its first legislative session in 1906, the Government of Saskatchewan established a municipal commission to investigate and report on an efficient and inexpensive system of local government for the new province. Two years later the commission made public its recommendations. These formed the basis of the Rural Municipality Act of 1908-9.[47] It was under this act that rural local government units were established in Grasslands.

In 1908 there were only two rural municipalities in Saskatchewan; most of the province was divided into Local Improvement Districts which were administered by the Department of Municipal Affairs at Regina. In order to decentralize the system and give local districts more autonomy, the local improvement districts were disbanded in 1909 and the province was redivided into nine-township blocks called Territorial Units. Provision was made for each territorial unit to become a rural municipality when conditions warranted. Basically, this meant that the unit could be converted by democratic vote into a municipality when the population was large enough to provide a sufficient tax-base. In 1912 those units which had not yet voted to establish local government were made into rural municipalities by the provincial government. The only exceptions were the units without sufficient population to make local government economically feasible. These became local improvement districts of 26 to 96 townships until such time as the residents were able to form a municipal government.

Most of the Grasslands area appears to have had local government thrust upon it by the provincial government in 1913. While there is not yet any direct evidence of this, the lateness of settlement and the generally unspectacular crops of the early years would seem to suggest that few residents would of their own volition have opted for increased taxation. With the exceptions of Stonehenge, which became a municipality in 1911, and Wood River which did so in 1912, all other rural municipalities in the area were formed in 1913. Seven territorial units within the region were simultaneously made small local improvement districts and remained as such until 1949 when four of them formed one large local improvement district and three formed another. As far as is known, this remained the governmental structure of the area until 1967, when Local Improvement District 920 was organized as Old Post Municipality with its office at Wood Mountain Station. Local Improvement District 923 has subsequently been organized as Val Marie Rural Municipality.

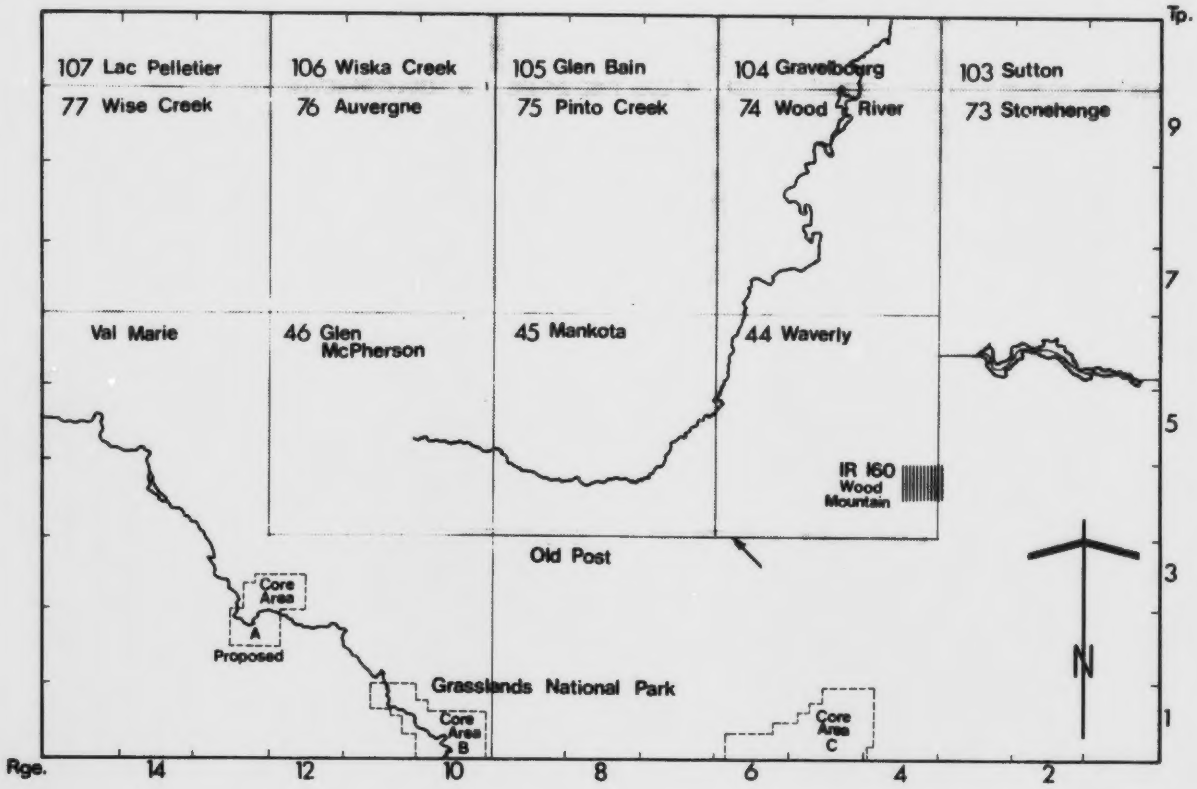

Tp.
107 Lac Pelletier
77 Wise Creek
106 Wiska Creek
76 Auvergne
105 Glen Bain
75 Pinto Creek
104 Gravelbourg
74 Wood River
103 Sutton
73 Stonehenge
Val Marie
46 Glen McPherson
45 Mankota
44 Waverly
IR 160 Wood Mountain
Old Post
Core Area A
Proposed
Grasslands National Park
Core Area B
Core Area C
N
9
7
5
3
1
Rge.
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
1/2" = 6 mi.

FIG. 17 Administrative Units in the Park Area

The organizational structure of rural municipalities was set out in the Act of 1908-9, and with minor changes remains the same today.[48] Each nine-township municipality was divided into six divisions of one and a half townships. Each of the divisions elected a representative to a municipal council and from the municipality as a whole a reeve was elected to preside over the council. The council could then appoint a secretary, a treasurer, and an assessor. Sometimes two or even all of these positions were combined. Local improvement districts, it should be added, have district committees for liason with the provincial government.

With respect to functions, the committee of a local improvement district had far fewer than the municipal council. It could pass resolutions which were forwarded to Regina for consideration, but it had no authority to pass bylaws. Its main functions were local improvements, weed and animal pest control, and fire fighting. These restricted powers were considered sufficient for an impermanent organization. The rural municipal council, by contrast, was assumed to be a permanent organization and thus its range of activities was more extensive. In addition to the powers of a local improvement district, its more important activities included road construction, provision of health and welfare services, establishment of drainage districts, union hospitals, fire protection and hail insurance schemes, and the collection of school taxes.

The financial requirements of the municipal council have traditionally been met in two ways. The first is local taxation, which generates considerable revenue and is confined to levies on land, improvements and businesses. Since many villages and towns have their own local governments, normally only land is taxed within a municipality in accordance with its assessed value. But in those cases where the land is used for non-agricultural purposes or where buildings are used for business purposes, additional levies are imposed. Municipalities are also empowered to raise money through the issuance of debentures, but the amount of debenture debt must not exceed five per cent of the municipality's taxable assessment. In recent years expenditures have so outstripped the local tax base that the provincial government has initiated a program of grants and cost-sharing programs.

Conflict and Consensus

In an article entitled "The Formal Organizations of Saskatchewan Farmers, 1900-65," Donald Willmott has quite ably argued that "formal organizations have been central to the community life of prairie farmers from pioneer times to the present."[49] This chapter offers further proof of Willmott's contention. To a large extent, society in Grasslands derived its character from the nature of its formal organizations.

Willmott points out several traditional explanations of the proliferation of formal organizations, including ecological considerations (i.e., sparsity of population, distance from urban centres), common economic interests, and traditional ideologies. Certainly each helps to account for the co-operative spirit which repeatedly moved settlers to collective action. But the case in recent years, concludes Willmott, has been that many of the bases for collective action have been eroded, with the result that "co-operative values have been considerably undermined."[50] He predicts that in the future rural formal organizations will become "more centralized, more formalized, more impersonal, and perhaps more efficient."[51]

Willmott's case, though belabored at times, is a good one. It is indeed curious that in the past, few persons noticed the plethora of formal organizations in agrarian communities, and that some even denied their existence. And surely after all of Willmott's examples, no one will dispute the co-operative basis of rural formal organizations. Unfortunately, to leave the discussion as Willmott does, charting the rise and probable fall of co-operation, is to present the image of a monolithic rural society. This need not be read as chastisement of Willmott; he made his point. But one does feel compelled to bring attention to the existence of conflict in rural society. An argument such as Willmott's, seeking co-operation by design, omits local antagonisms such as those between French and English, Methodists and Presbyterians, wheat pool advocates and wheat pool opponents, to name only a few of those which existed in Grasslands. The picture of rural society must be redrawn to show that while co-operation most certainly did exist within formal organizations, there was not necessarily any compatibility among formal organizations.

One further point might be made with reference to the vignettes presented above. Traditional formal organizations assuredly gave settlers a sense of security because of their familiarity. To be colloquial, such organizations made the settlers feel at home in their new surroundings. They helped conquer the isolation of Grasslands and simultaneously gave rise to a sense of community. It can be argued, however, that the other type of formal organization, that with more direct links to the wider world, very quickly began to erode the communal nature of Grasslands society. These organizations were the by-product of railways, newspapers, telephones - in short, of better communications. They suggest a local society growing increasingly complex and less interdependent through multiple contacts with the external society. They represent, in sum, the integration of the Grasslands community into the mainstream of western Canadian society. If this view is sustained by further investigation, it would seem that Willmott will have to reconsider his dating of the breakdown of community in rural society.

Note on Sources

The sources for a study of formal organizations are diverse and scattered. Complete records of any one organization are not likely to be extant, and this is an area of research in which oral history techniques might be used to great advantage. Personal inquiry might also uncover caches of records which are at present not available to researchers.

The complex history of religion can only be written by in-depth research in the major church archives. The collections which will be of most use to the student of Grasslands are those of the United Church of Canada, Saskatchewan Conference (housed at Saskatoon) and the Archives of L'Archdiocese de St. Boniface at Winnipeg. Both contain extensive material on local parishes and pastors. Further information on the United Church congregations may be found in the Church Union Collection, United Church of Canada Archives, E.J. Pratt Library, Toronto. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Archives of the Manitoba-Saskatchewan District contains numerous congregational records pertaining to different areas as well as autobiographies of some pioneer pastors, and this source may be of use too.

To study the history of school districts, school boards, and educational facilities, one must begin with the governmental records. Patient searching through volumes of the Saskatchewan Gazette will reveal the formation dates of every school district in Grasslands. This source should also yield information concerning the area of each school district and the names of persons responsible for its formation. It is possible that the records of the Department of Education contain the original settlers' petitions. The Adam Shortt Library at Saskatoon also has a chronological list of school districts. Generalizations about the operations of individual schools may be found in the published School Inspectors' Reports. Those for the period before the mid-1920s were printed in the Annual Reports of the Department of Education; those covering succeeding years are in the Public Service Monthly. A MEd Admin. thesis by Jack Funk, entitled "The Origin and Development of Consolidated School Districts in Saskatchewan" (Univ. of Sask., 1971) provides a good introduction to this important theme. More particular information is likely to be found in the School Inspectors' Reports. The offices of the Saskatchewan Archives Board at Saskatoon and Regina contain some material which could be used to illuminate specific areas of concern. For example, at Saskatoon are kept the records of Milly School District No. 926 for 1913-14, which include daily registers, minutes of school trustee meetings, accounts, and a fairly complete architectural description of the schoolhouse exterior. It would also be worthwhile checking with the offices of consolidated school districts to see if they have any old records in their files. A good overview of the schools question is Keith McLeod, "Politics, Schools, and the French Language 1881-1931," in N. Ward and D.S. Spafford (eds.) Politics in Saskatchewan (Toronto, 1968), pp. 124-50.

The legislative framework of community schemes like rural telephone companies, union hospitals, mutual hail insurance and so on, may be found in the Revised Statutes of Saskatchewan 1921. Concise summaries of each are given by W.A. Mackintosh, in his Economic Problems of the Prairie Provinces (Toronto, 1938), pp. 131-57. Information on local schemes will be available from the Annual Reports of the Department of Municipal Affairs, 1908-present, from the records of the Provincial Archives Board, or from surviving participants.

Unlike the history of community schemes, that of the agrarian movement in Saskatchewan has received considerable attention from scholars. The secondary works are well known and there is no need to review them here. With respect to primary sources, most of the extant records of the various agrarian groups are housed at the Archives in Saskatoon, and a few are at Regina. Too voluminous to list, these include mainly post-1926 records of the United Farmers of Canada (UFC).

Correspondence with UFC locals, rural municipality files, and convention minutes comprise the bulk of these records. Some of the records of the SGGA, SWGGA, FUC, and other groups are also available, but these are of limited value. A convenient finding aid exists for this mass of material, making the researcher's task less onerous. Again, this is an area in which oral history may prove beneficial.

Students of local government in Saskatchewan are fortunate to have several excellent surveys to provide necessary background information. These are noted in the footnotes to this chapter. The only extant primary sources are the files relating to individual local government units, kept by the Department of Municipal Affairs at the Legislative Buildings, Regina, the correspondence and records of the department itself, and the departmental Annual Reports, 1908-present.

CHAPTER XII DEPRESSION

Introduction

The second phase of agricultural development in Grasslands drew to an end with the bumper crop of 1928. During the previous four years economic recovery permitted widespread farm mechanization. The increasing importance of wheat as a cash crop caused farmers to petition for, and to obtain, more railway branch-lines. The service centres which accompanied the branch lines lessened marketing costs, and this, along with rising wheat prices, allowed greater capital formation and agricultural expansion. Between 1921 and 1931 the total amount of land seeded to field crops increased by over 100,000 acres.[1]

The prosperity of these years was common to all of western Canada. In 1929, however, a short crop was harvested due to the recurrence of unfavorable climatic conditions. The economic insecurity which this occasioned was exacerbated by the collapse of the world economy just a month later. There was nothing localized about this calamity. For ten years the entire West would undergo an

> exhaustion of reserves, a mounting burden of private and governmental indebtedness, relief advances, capital disinvestment (as revealed in the steady depreciation of farm machinery, buildings and equipment, schools, highways, and telephone systems), abandoned farms, a sharp reduction in the standard of living of the entire agricultural population, and all the other marks of a chronically depressed economic area.[2]

The drought and depression of the Thirties so blanketed the West that one could discuss different areas only in terms of the degree of severity with which the tragedy struck. Because the Grasslands economy was precarious even in relatively good years, the area was particularly hard hit by the Depression.

Prices and Pests

Grasslands farmers have always had difficulty building up adequate reserves of capital. Despite the excellent crop and cash returns of the mid-1920s, one may argue that they were in a very vulnerable financial position on the eve of the Depression. It will be recalled that during the halcyon year of 1915, most western farmers, including those in Grasslands, borrowed capital and invested heavily in new farm machinery, buildings, and land. No sooner had the Grasslands farmers done so when they were hit by four to five years of drought which reduced their agricultural incomes to a minimum and placed some of them on the relief rolls. The post-war depression, which lasted at least until mid-1923, further reduced their ability to retire any of the loans contracted during the war years. During the ensuing years of prosperity, those farmers situated on marginal and submarginal lands were least able to reduce their indebtedness. A study of farm mortgaging, done by W.F. Ewert in 1941, clearly shows that between 1921 and 1928 farmers of marginal and submarginal lands managed to pay less than half the amount in principal and interest than farmers better situated.[3] Ewert further notes that this relationship between land classification and ability to repay loans,

> while most evident for the 1921-1928 period was significant for the whole period 1921-1936. Because of low prices and crop failure during the 1929-1936 period farms on both good and poor land either had to use up reserves and deplete accumulated capital or depend on outside assistance. There was little surplus even on the best land wherewith to meet fixed mortgage commitments.[4]

There is no doubt that Ewert's generalizations apply to the farmers of Grasslands, for as late as 1939 an organizer for the United Farmers of Canada, whose territory covered part of Grasslands, could report that,

> I estimate that about 1/2 of the farms in my UFC district are owned by loan Cos, at this time, and that their crop shares are from 1/2 to 2/3 as in many cases they supply tractor, seed, fuel and machinery. One by one farmers are becoming tenants ...[5]

Nature was as harsh to the farmers as the mortgage and loan companies. From 1929 to 1934 the chief problem was drought. In those six crop years, no yield of more than five bushels to the acre was recorded in Grasslands.[6] The worst year was 1931, when the average crop return was less than one bushel per acre. The farmers could scarcely combat such a prolonged drought, but clearly their continued use of improper cultivation techniques did nothing to help matters. Farmers were still tilling their soil to the consistency of sand and their fields literally blew away. In fact, it seems that the most vivid recollections of the Depression are of the interminable dust storms. In a passage reminiscent of Sinclair Ross's evocative *The Lamp at Noon*, Edna Banks has written that,

> Many days were grey with thick clouds of drifting soil that hid the sun; dust and sand sifted into the house through the walls and through closed windows on which were winter's storm windows, on to the floor, the table, the chairs and your board was smothered in dust. Of two floors, two bedrooms and the living room, after two dust storms on two consecutive days, I swept up and weighed fifteen pounds of pure clay as fine as powder. When a lamp, in desperation, was lit at mid-day on a day when you could scarcely see across the room, its light was merely a yellow spot.[7]

In some years the winds came in late spring or early summer, and completely blew away the crop which had just been seeded. In others, the air was calm until the seedlings were above ground, and then wind came sudenly, shifting acres of fine, razor-sharp dust and sand, cutting down everything in its path. As long as the farmers clung to their old ways they were helpless against the wind.

There were other natural disasters which claimed the meagre crops in Grasslands during the 1930s. In 1935, for example, a good crop was anticipated because of the favorable spring rains. But the damp conditions were also ideal for the spread of stem rust, a plant disease which swept over the area from the east. Carried by the wind, the spores of rust penetrate the growing wheat plant and absorb food materials from it. These spores continue to grow as long as the plant remains green, with the result that the plant dies from lack of food and moisture. In the southeastern part of the province alone, some 50 to 60 million bushels of wheat were destroyed by rust in 1935.[8]

Animal and insect pests were equally destructive. The rains which spread stem rust into the area also brought a severe infestation of mosquitoes. The significance of this infestation went beyond the annoyance of mosquito bites, for these insects were the carriers of equine encephalomyelitis, or sleeping sickness. The disease ravaged the horse population of Grasslands and was so bad in some areas that farmers were forced to purchase tractors if they wished to continue farming.[9] Between 1931 and 1941 the horse population of Grasslands declined by over twelve thousand,[10] a fair proportion of which may be attributed to the disease.

On the winds that swept in from Montana and the Dakotas came millions of grasshoppers. The spread of these insects was made worse by the drought. As farmers deserted their farms, or failed to cultivate land, the abandoned acreage became a potential incubation bed for the grasshoppers' eggs. And, as more and more grasshoppers hatched, they denuded more crop acreage and thereby enlarged the incubation beds. James Gray has described their destructiveness:

> The grasshopper ate everything in sight. They chewed pitchfork handles into unusability, ate clothing off the lines, chewed through the shirts on the backs of motorists in cars and farmers in the field. The grasshoppers seemed addicted to the residue of human perspiration for they concentrated their chewing where sweaty hands and necks had rested. Or it might have been that it was only moisture which attracted them for they ate everything moist and particularly if it was green. They stripped caragana hedges of leaves in a matter of minutes, devoured gardens at one swoop and left the country completely devoid of vegetation.[11]

The problem was so severe in Grasslands that by 1932 federal and provincial authorities were annually pouring hundreds and sometimes thousands of dollars into each rural municipality to combat the insects through poisoning campaigns.[12] Between 1932 and 1936, close to twelve thousand dollars was pumped into Grasslands municipalities to aid the grasshopper fight.[13]

Campaigns of destruction were also directed at the ubiquitous gopher. The voraciousness of the gopher was probably second only to that of the grasshopper, and it has been estimated that in 1938 alone gophers damaged almost four million dollars worth of crops in Saskatchewan.[14] To the delight of farm children, rural municipalities established a bounty on gophers. The going rate was a penny per tail, and snaring gophers became the common pastime. To bolster this assault on the gopher population, the Dominion and provincial governments dispensed funds at the municipal level to be used in poison campaigns. In 1934-35 alone, over five thousand dollars was advanced to Grasslands municipalities for the purchase of gopher poison, and this was followed in 1935-36 by a further advance of more than one thousand dollars.[15]

Other pests which caused less damage than grasshoppers and gophers, but still enough to cause concern among farmers, included army worms and sawflies. Myrtle Moorhouse remembered army worms as,

> light green in color and about half an inch long, [they] went in a straight path from the south-west to the north-west, by the millions. When they came to an obstacle, like a house or telephone pole, they never went around it, just up one side and down the other, and on their way, to their destination I never knew where, but [sic] they ate everything in their path ... A cow would swallow thousands in their [sic] daily browsing for food, and it made the milk unpalatable ...[16]

The sawfly, in sharp contrast to the indiscriminant army worm, is addicted to hollow-stemmed plants in which it can lay its eggs.[17] Wheat plants are particularly susceptible. The sawfly deposits its eggs inside the hollow stem, the eggs hatch and the larvae feed inside the stem until the grain approaches ripeness. They then move to the bottom of the stem, girdle it internally, and move on to the roots. Once girdled, the stem falls over and the plant dies.

With the exception of the sawfly, these animal and insect pests proved just as devastating to the natural grasses of the area as they did to cereal crops. This of course affected the livelihood of those farmers who had mixed enterprises, for the pests destroyed most of the grass which survived the prolonged drought. To make matters worse, the farmers of Grasslands had finally adopted the advice of agricultural experts who had repeatedly argued that to farm successfully in a semi-arid area one needed to diversify one's farm operation.[18] While the number of horses per farm decreased markedly in the 1930s, the cattle population showed a distinctly upward trend. In 1931 the average number of cattle per farm was 5.2; by 1936 it had reached 8.8.[19] By 1938 a district official of United Farmers of Canada was writing to his superior that "from reports coming in I am convinced that from thirty to forty per cent of the stock here [near Rochglen] will be dead or useless by spring ...."[20]

The plight of the farmers would have been ameliorated by higher prices for farm produce, but these had been depressed since 1930. As William Allen and E.C. Hope have commented:

> Since 1930, the average values of the wheat crop have been about one-quarter of those from 1924 to 1928, with that of 1937 being only about one-eighth of this amount. The absence of receipts from other sources, the loss of feed crops, and the partial or complete failures of pastures and grazing areas accentuated the difficulties connected with livestock enterprises. With revenues from most farm enterprises continuing severely restricted, the problem of financing Saskatchewan agriculture increases in difficulty ...[21]

With respect to grain farmers, the low yields and prices often combined to produce a situation in which operating expenses outweighed cash receipts from the harvested crop. Those who raised livestock as well found themselves without sufficient feed supplies and were obliged to sell their cattle at depressed prices, or alternatively, watch their cattle die. Many Grasslands farmers sold their cattle at a price of one cent per pound, "which, in most instances, amounts to something like five to eight dollars per head."[22] Often this did not pay the shipping charges.

A shorter depression could have been weathered by the people of Grasslands. They had, after all, survived repeated bouts of severe drought and depressed prices in past years. But ten consecutive years of struggle against the elements and a depressed economy reduced them to destitution. Material goods wore out and could not be replaced:

> Household plenishings, during the famine years, have become exhausted. In many cases, kitchen utensils are entirely inadequate. Stove grates have been broken and remain unreplaced. Children are inadequately clothed and often, the supply of bedclothes have [sic] so dwindled that they have had to be reinforced by old newspapers, placed between coverlets in an attempt to keep out the cold. Many of the houses, now almost entirely without paint, have been banked up with earth and even manure, to prevent the entrance of the icy gale which searches out each chink and crevice. When a window pane is broken and there is no money for replacements, many of these houses show the apertures stuffed with old rags or boarded up with paste-board, giving them an incredibly disreputable appearance.[23]

Farm machinery broke down and there was not enough money to buy the replacement parts, even though they were vital to the continuation of farming. Clothes were patched with "clothes already patched."[24] No money was available for gasoline, and so many automobiles were converted into 'Bennett buggies'.[25] An attitude of 'make do' was of necessity adopted by everyone.

As the Depression worsened and everyone's means dwindled to virtually nothing, even things like medical care became luxuries. Myrtle Moorhouse recalled that whenever they went to a doctor the first question was, "Have you got the money to pay for this?"[26] Because her brother did not have a dollar for ether, his broken arm was set without anaesthetic.[27] Even maternity cases were sometimes turned away because the family had no money. As a Lisieux farmer wrote to the secretary of the United Farmers:

> Can a Red Cross hospital turn down a maternity case? I owe the hospital for several maternity cases and have been unable to pay, or even [to make] part payments. Now, Mr. C.E. Sproule, who seems to manage affairs down there says that if I don't make payments, no more use until I pay.[28]

These were probably not isolated cases.

The Depression had a demoralizing effect upon most of the people who lived through it. As late 1970 Mrs. Niels Gording wrote, "I don't want to get into this [the Depression]; it is a painful period that we would all like to forget."[29] And Mrs. Moorhouse commented:

> How can I describe the hopes in the spring, only to be sore [sic] disappointed later on, year after year, dust storms, horses dying with sleeping sickness, grasshoppers, wire worms, army worms, no money, relief cheques which were a mere pittance and had to be coaxed, begged and wrung out of the authorities. We sold eggs for 6¢ per dozen, butter for 10¢ per pound, pork for 6¢ per pound, oats were 10¢ a bushel and wheat between 19¢ and 50¢ per bushel, if we ever had any. Cliff [her husband] would sometimes put in 200 acres of crop, and a three-day blow would send the sand flying and cut off the small tender blades. He would walk from window to window crying, with his lungs full of sand that he had breathed in while seeding.[30]

Her husband later committed suicide.

The seemingly interminable Depression had a marked effect on the agrarian economy of Grasslands. Farmers had no money for new machinery, nor for repairs for the old, and many of their horses succumbed to sleeping sickness. Often crops were so poor that they did not even yield enough seed grain for the following spring. As a result of these and other conditions, no expansion of farm acreage occurred between 1931 and 1941. In fact, the total farm acreage in Grasslands decreased by almost 18,000 acres in that period.[31] The number of farm operators decreased too, from 3,516 to 3,046, a decline of more than 13 per cent.[32] Since the urban population decreased as well,[33] it is likely that farm abandonment was taking place. The only alternative explanations for the decrease would be, first, that mortgage and loan companies were foreclosing on farmsteads, and there is no evidence to suggest that this was the case; or second, that a consolidation of farms was occurring, in which case one would not expect such a marked decline in farm acreage. To at least two contemporary observers it seemed that the out-migration of people had been arrested by 1934; in that year D.B. MacRae and R.M. Scott wrote that,

> Few people are moving out. Mostly it is said they are not moving because they have no place to go. Reports from those who have gone north in the last three years do not encourage others to make the venture.[34]

Succeeding years proved MacRae and Scott wrong. The out-migration of rural people between 1936 and 1941 was actually greater than from 1931 to 1936.[35] Over the entire ten-year period, more than 22 per cent of the farm population left Grasslands. Significantly, the out-migration seems to have been heaviest from those rural municipalities with the poorest soils.[36]

Plummetting cash reserves, loss of one-third of the agrarian population with a further drop in the amount of circulating money, and the difficulty of obtaining credit had a detrimental effect upon the local merchants. It has unfortunately been virtually impossible to estimate the extent of the decline in retail business, given the limitations of this study.[37] However, it is known that in the province as a whole, retail trade declined by 45 per cent between 1930 and 1933,[38] and it is very unlikely that a different situation would have obtained in Grasslands. As Edna Banks has written:

> When the drought and depressed [economic] conditions lasted for about ten years, general stores that had once

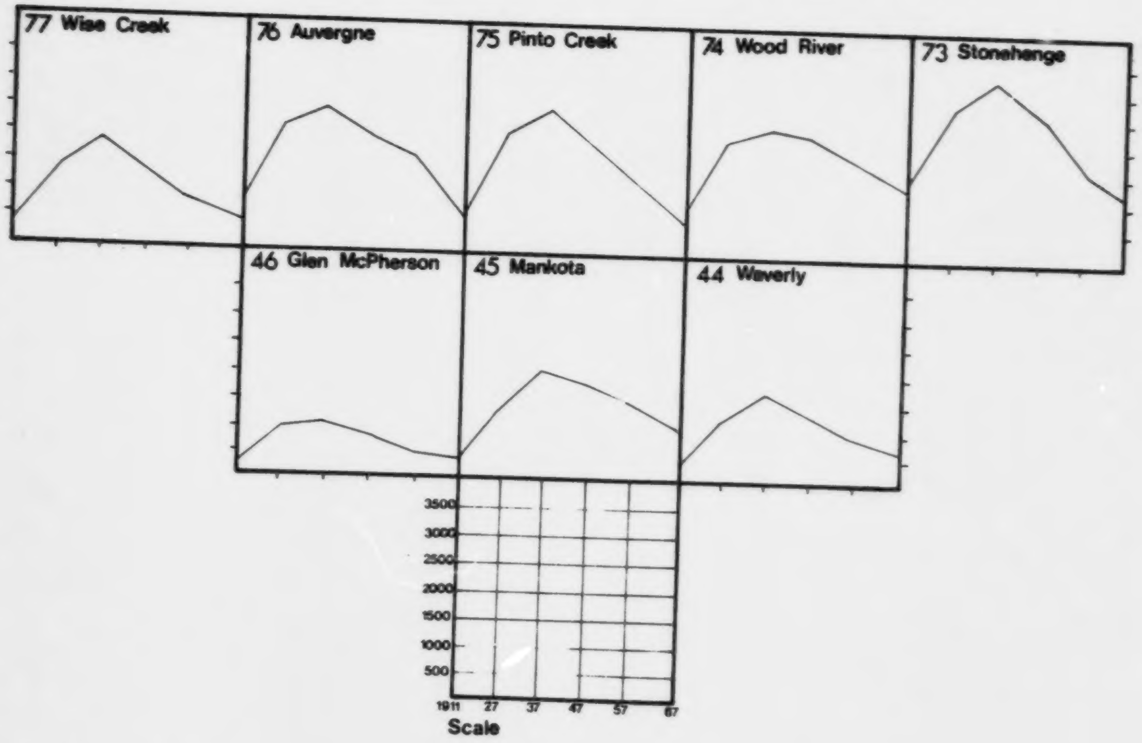


FIG. 18 Rural Population by Rural Municipality, 1911-1961

> been busy and prosperous, closed their door[s] and moved away. Grain elevators were pulled down and rebuilt in more prosperous areas ...[39]

If anything, it is likely that the decline in retail business was even more marked in the Grasslands area.

General stores, which were still the main economic units of small towns in Saskatchewan, were also confronted by increasing competition from a variety of businesses.[40] The mail-order houses, long an economic threat to the small family store, continued to make inroads into the local economy. Chain stores, a phenomenon of the 1920s, captured an increasing proportion of the declining market. And finally, disgruntled farmers were turning to consumers' co-operatives as a means of cutting costs. Against such competition the privately owned general store had little chance.

The effects of a shrinking market and increasing retail competition showed up in the demographic statistics of the depression years. Between 1931 and 1941 the urban population of Grasslands declined by almost six per cent.[41] Moreover, the pattern of metropolitanism which emerged in the previous decade was reinforced. The smallest centres, like Billimun and Gouverneur, began their descent into oblivion. Slightly more populous villages, such as Limerick, Hazenmore and Woodrow, saw their metropolitan aspirations dashed as geographical location and service variety conspired to establish marginally larger centres like Ponteix and Lafleche as the area's main entrêpots. But still the entire area was drawn into the trading orbits of external centres like Gravelbourg and Assiniboia.

After three decades of settlement economic instability continued to be the hallmark of the Grasslands area. The drought of the 1930s differed in degree but not in kind from those previously experienced by the settlers. Economic collapse on a world scale only highlighted a familiar local scenario. The duration of this drought and depression, however, reduced most settlers to penury. It exhausted reserves of capital, caused innumerable defaults on mortgage and loan payments, and generally lowered the standard of living to an unprecedented level. Even a planned and highly subsidized colony of settlers like Coal Creek near Killdeer (Appendix A) could not withstand the climatic harshness and economic blight of the decade. These unparalleled conditions called for, indeed demanded, strong governmental relief initiatives.

The Agents of Relief

Stability of income in a wheat-producing area is primarily dependent upon the volume, price, and grade of the export staple.[42] In the 1930s the weather and herbivorous pests drastically lowered the volume and grade of wheat, while the Depression kept the price low. In Saskatchewan, where there is "no important source of income which does not derive, in the final analysis, from agriculture,"[43] the situation was of crisis proportions. Not only was the economy of much of the West impaired, but clearly this had serious national implications as well. As A.E. Safarian has noted, agriculture "was still the single most important industry in the country."[44] Consequently, both provincial and federal programs to ameliorate the situation were swiftly implemented.

It must be stressed that government officials initially treated the crisis of 1929 as temporary. South-central Saskatchewan had experienced such trials since first settled, and there was no reason to believe that the crisis of 1929 would be any different. From the autumn of 1929 until the late summer of 1931 the municipal and provincial levels of government shared responsibility for the distribution of both direct relief and agricultural assistance. During this period the value of such relief in the Grasslands area was over half a million dollars.[45] Under the direction of the Saskatchewan Department of Highways, road work was provided for farmers who had suffered successive crop failures. More than one-quarter of a million dollars in wages was distributed to Grasslands farmers under this make-work scheme.[46] Grants-in-aid from the Dominion Government assisted these and other projects.

When the crisis did not abate after three years, but in fact grew worse, the Government of Saskatchewan established the Saskatchewan Relief Commission to deal exclusively with rural relief.[47] This commission consisted of five board members, chosen to reflect the different political attitudes in the province. This was ostensibly to prevent discrimination against relief applicants on the basis of political persuasion. The task of the board members was the formulation of policy. Overseeing the actual administration of relief was a general manager. Twelve advisory members completed the membership of the commission.

The main concern of the Saskatchewan Relief Commission was the provision of relief services where they were most needed. To meet this objective, the province was divided into three areas according to the number of crop failures in the previous three years. Area "A," which had suffered three consecutive crop failures, included the Grasslands area. Relief was uniformly handled through relief officers in each rural municipality. They were assisted by voluntary relief committees appointed by the commission. This system was used only in the first year of operation, after which it was decided to use rural municipal councils as local administrators, under the guidance of commission-appointed supervisors. All applications for relief were channelled through this hierarchy of officials and received final acceptance or rejection from the approval board of the commission. The system may have been efficient in terms of eliminating unworthy applicants, but the excessive paperwork made it less than expeditious.

Direct relief was distributed through normal business outlets, thus disrupting the distributive structure of the province as little as possible. All food and clothing orders bore a merchant's name and only that merchant was permitted to fill the order. In this way the commission hoped to lessen the Depression's impact upon small business persons. It was probably in areas such as the Grasslands that the system's shortcomings were most noticeable. The loss of population which occurred there, coupled with the inflexibility of the relief distribution system, very likely spread business too thinly among merchants with the result that a larger number bordered on bankruptcy. At first all relief orders listed both the goods to be supplied and the prices at which they were to be sold. These orders were sent to the relief applicants who redeemed them at the store and then the merchant cashed the vouchers at the local bank. This system was later streamlined by issuing orders for food worth a specified amount, and the merchant filled the order according to the wishes of the applicant. This eliminated much work and pleased more applicants. The commission also set the prices for all goods supplied through relief orders. These prices were sufficiently high to allow the merchant a 15 to 20 per cent profit.

The rigorous winter climate in Saskatchewan made distribution of clothing and fuel supplies one of the commission's priorities. Prior to the organization of the Saskatchewan Relief Commission in 1931, the Red Cross had distributed clothing with financial assistance from the provincial government. During the autumn of 1931 the commission accepted responsibility for supplying those areas most stricken by drought. Grasslands was of course included among these. In early 1932 the commission also assumed responsibility for all other areas. As was the case with clothing, supplying fuel was essentially a winter task. Relief orders for coal were handled in a manner similar to that used for food distribution. In all cases, preference was given to Saskatchewan fuel, but in the western part of the province lignite from Alberta was shipped in because of the lower transportation costs. No coal orders were issued in areas where wood was easily obtained. This last provision makes one wonder what policy was adopted in the Wood Mountain district, where wood was available but scarcely plentiful.

The amount of direct relief supplied varied from year to year. During the first relief year, from the autumn of 1929 to the autumn of 1930, total expenditures in the eight Grasslands rural municipalities were slightly over $26,000.[48] This works out to approximately $7.68 per capita, hardly an imposing sum.[49] From the size of this figure it seems clear that farmers were still depleting their small reserves of capital. During the following relief year, over five times as much was spent on direct relief in Grasslands and the expenditure continued to grow. By 1931-32 the figure had reached more than one-half million dollars. It then fluctuated annually, according to the size of the crop harvested and the prices received for it. From the standpoint of direct relief dollars spent, it was in 1937-38 that the Depression bottomed out. In that year, the commission pumped over $800,000. into the area. Over the ten-year period 1929-39, close to five million dollars in direct relief was supplied to Grasslands residents.

As the Depression worsened, the provision of medical care increasingly became the responsibility of the Saskatchewan Relief Commission. The reasons are not hard to find. Each year fewer people could afford to pay their doctors and dentists. Union hospitals, which depended upon municipal taxation for much of their operating budgets, were obliged to lay off staff and cut back services. The commission assisted by making individual monthly payments to doctors and dentists, and by giving hospitals a grant of 25 cents per day for each relief patient treated. Close to $13,000. dollars was spent in Grasslands for such necessary medical care between 1929 and 1939.[50] This provided for at least a minimum level of care as opposed to the neglect which would have existed had such grants been unavailable.

Education was another field in which the commission provided assistance. The most common problems were a serious lack of fuel for the schoolhouses and the inability of most rural municipalities to pay teachers' salaries because of declining tax revenues. Blair Neatby has recorded that some carloads of coal were donated by the Estevan mines,[51] but it has not been ascertained that any of this reached Grasslands schools. It was more usual for the commission to purchase coal and then distribute it to those school districts where fuel was unavailable from local sources. The Grasslands area certainly met this criterion. With respect to salaries, the commission provided direct relief to teachers, to be repaid when the rural municipality was again in a position to meet salary arrears. The extent to which these educational problems were manifest in Grasslands is indicated by the fact that almost $122,000. was made available for such purposes by the commission and by its successors during the Depression.[52]

At the root of these problems, as already suggested, was the decline in municipal revenues. And of course, the municipalities had other expenses to meet as well, such as road construction and maintenance, culvert installation and bridge repair, snowplowing, and so on. The decline in local population merely aggravated the situation. In order to maintain a semblance of normalcy the relief commission stepped in and aided rural municipalities through guaranteed bank loans. Over the ten-year Depression period, more than a million dollars in loans were utilized for municipal purposes in Grasslands.[53] This money permitted rural officials to maintain if not expand services and thus made the post-depression recovery less expensive.

The Saskatchewan Relief Commission was not alone in its campaign to relieve distress among the agrarian population. As George Britnell has noted,

> Churches, welfare organizations, and individuals both inside and outside the province played an important part in the alleviation of distress through the distribution of hundreds of carloads of fruit and vegetables, clothing, fuel and other necessities.[54]

In addition, the two main railway companies assisted by waiving all freight charges upon these donations.[55] In an attempt to rationalize distribution of these donations, and to avoid duplication of the work of the commission, the Saskatchewan Voluntary Relief Committee was organized in 1932. The committee's attempts to provide relief services and goods in the Grasslands area remain to be documented.

Grasslands farmers, in a return to the co-operation which was so pronounced in the homestead period, helped each other by organizing such things as 'beef rings'. The original purpose of these rings was threefold; they solved the problem of refrigeration, corrected the vegetable imbalance of most diets, and conserved the breeding stock of individual farms. During the Depression their main purpose was to provide food, for the drought and insects had destroyed everyone's garden plots. Herds of livestock were expanding yearly and feed was in short supply, thus livestock became one of the farmer's few expendable possessions. Gorden Howard of the Aneroid district recalled one beef ring which involved 20 to 30 families.[56] These families became shareholders in the ring, with each farmer supplying one steer of about 1000 pounds. Sometimes two families divided a share when their food requirements were small. A butcher was appointed and each Friday evening he slaughtered a steer. On the following morning the carcass was cut up and the meat divided among the shareholders. Records were kept of the amount of meat each shareholder received. The butcher was given about ten dollars per month for his services and also kept the hides which sold for two or three dollars each. At the end of summer there was a final cash settlement made to those farmers who had supplied the largest animals. This was probably just one of the ways in which farmers co-operated to relieve their common plight.

As the creation of beef rings attests, charity was not the desire of the thousands of farmers on relief. Nor was it the aim of the Saskatchewan Relief Commission. Consequently, millions of dollars were spent by the commission on agricultural assistance. This, it as hoped, would lower the cost of direct relief and allow farmers to maintain their self-respect as well. These dollars were spent in a variety of ways.[57]

In many instances, repeated crop failures left farmers without sufficient seed grain for the following year. The commission recognized the obvious fact that without seed grain cereal production would halt, and it took steps to ensure that seed grain was available to needy farmers. Working closely with the provincial Department of Agriculture, the commission froze shipment of all existing elevator stocks of seed grain and redistributed it where most needed. When elevator stocks proved insufficient, a bonus of a few cents per bushel was offered to all farmers with granaries of surplus grain. If, however, farmers desperate for cash sold all of their harvest, the commission refused to supply them with seed grain. In those areas when wind erosion was a problem, such as Grasslands, the commission agreed to supply seed for reseeding if weather conditions appeared favorable.

Seed grain was of no use without the machinery to sow it, and many farmers could not even afford to repair broken-down machinery. The commission agreed to supply needed funds on an emergency basis only, with the provision that it would have the first lien on the proceeds from the crop. Between 1929 and 1939 the Saskatchewan government spent more than three million dollars on seed grain and related expenses in the Grasslands area.[58] In certain years, like 1931, local farmers could not even afford to buy binder twine. Another $36,000. were spent to supply farmers with this necessity.[59]

Of course no harvesting could be done without motive power for the machinery and this exacted more emergency money from the authorities. Quite a few Grasslands farmers had purchased tractors during the previous decade and close to $69,000. were made available to them for the purchase of gasoline and lubricants in the period 1920-39.[60]

The expenditure for gasoline and lubricants is dwarfed by that for feed grain and fodder. Continuing drought and insect infestations had destroyed or seriously diminished local stocks of coarse grains and hay, and more than two and a half million was spent during the Depression to replace them.[61] Much of the feed grain was obtained by freezing the shipment of elevator stocks and redistributing them. In some relief years, like 1930-31 and 1936-37, seed rye was given to Grasslands farmers to produce more local feed grain. The fodder supply was bolstered by importing carloads of hay from various places and by municipal baling schemes whereby local crews were subsidized to cut and bale hay in northern Saskatchewan and neighboring Manitoba. In other years local cattle were wintered in the north, where fodder was more plentiful. It was not until 1937 that the folly of these programs was realized.

In their zeal to rescue cattle herds and rehabilitate western agriculture, government authorities helped create a surplus of livestock. James Gray has written that,

> there were far too many cattle on the farms in Saskatchewan. Until the land could be made to support the cattle population it was a tragic lunacy for farmers to try to keep so many. The economics were hopeless. At a time when cows might bring less than $15 a head, what was the point of paying $12 a ton freight for hay costing $7.50 a ton to give to farmers on relief to sustain the $15 cows over a single winter? There was no point, except that the farmers and the cows were there and the cows could die without winter feed.[62]

In 1937 the drought withered fodder supplies to a minimum and the Dominion Government reacted by offering to buy all the surplus cattle. Incentives were held forth. The government agreed to pay all freight charges involved and to pay the Winnipeg price at the point of shipment. In addition, the government announced that it would not supply relief fodder to any farmers who did not reduce their livestock herds. The reductions were to be in accordance with federal stipulations. Not more than one horse was allowed for every 35 cultivated acres and the total number was not to exceed 12; two milk cows could be kept by those with three or four dependent children and in no case could more than four milk cows be retained; one steer was allowed for meat; one brood sow was permitted, as was one pig for every member of the family; and finally, 50 birds (poultry) could be kept.[63] Despite these stringent measures the amount of money spent on feed and fodder in Grasslands skyrocketed in the next year. This rise, however, may be attributed to the increased cost of feed rather than to any other factor.

Millions of dollars of agricultural assistance would have been wasted if mortgage and loan companies had been allowed free rein in foreclosing on Grasslands farms after several years of depression. They were prevented from doing so by a series of debt adjustment acts, both provincial and federal. Regardless of their specific provisions, these acts all concerned the redistribution of the burden of debt and depression throughout the Canadian economy. By affecting the transfer of incomes within the economy as a whole, they made it possible for farmers to continue their operations despite a mountain of debt, thereby creating a more stable post-depression agricultural sector.

The seriousness of the Depression forced a reconsideration of debt adjustment machinery. In Saskatchewan, as in most of the nation, there had seldom been occasions when debt adjustment could not be dealt with on an individual basis. During the First World War, Saskatchewan passed an act which "provided for moratorium legislation relating to the postponement of debts and prohibition of process by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council."[64] Seven years later a debt adjustment board was established without legal enactment to deal with individual cases on an informal basis.[65] The power of this board was subsequently expanded, but all cases continued to be dealt with without recourse to legal proceedings. This machinery reflected the contemporary belief that the free enterprise system had an intrinsic capacity for settling such problems. This belief was rudely shattered by the wholesale breakdown of normal debtor-creditor relations which followed the economic collapse of 1929. In response to the new situation, the province enacted debt-postponement legislation in 1931 and strengthened it in succeeding years. George Britnell has summarized the provisions of these legislative acts:

> Two of the most significant measures were the Debt Adjustment Act, 1933, which deprived the creditor of the use of the machinery of the Courts for the collection of debts unless the creditor had first secured the permission of the provincial Debt Adjustment Board to bring the action, and the Limitation of Civil Rights Act, 1933, which effected a revision of the terms of existing contracts such as mortgages and agreements for sale of land by restricting the creditor's rights to collection of the proceeds of one-third of the crop grown in any year less one year's taxes, regardless of the terms of the original contract. An amendment to this Act in 1935 provided for the removal of the personal covenant in future mortgages and agreements of sale.[66]

These acts, it will be observed, only deferred the collection of debts. They provided immediate relief to the debtor but simultaneously increased the amount of indebtedness by extending the period in which interest was charged. They were, therefore, only stopgap measures which merely postponed the inevitable. It remained for the Dominion Government to enact more beneficial legislation.

The Farmer's Creditors Arrangement Act of 1934 was broader in scope than any provincial legislation concerning debt adjustment. It provided for compulsory adjustment between debtors and creditors through a simple and inexpensive procedure. Official receivers were appointed in each judicial district to attempt voluntary adjustments between debtors and their creditors. The receiver assisted the farmer in the preparation of a proposal of settlement to be submitted to the creditors. If three-quarters of the creditors agreed to the proposal, it was approved by the courts and could be acted upon. If such concurrence could not be reached, the case was appealed to a Board of Review, which was empowered to impose a final settlement. This act was designed to provide farmers with:

> the benefits of bankruptcy legislation where a debtor's obligations are discharged to the extent of the inability of himself or his assets to meet them, without the disadvantages that usually pertain to bankruptcy proceedings where the debtor's assets are sold off and he gives up possession.[67]

Two basic objectives were met by this legislation. First, it provided a simple remedy for creditors. Previously their most common recourse was foreclosure on farms with little market value. Under this act they usually obtained a cash settlement which could be reinvested. Secondly, and more importantly from the government's viewpoint, the legislation enabled farmers to retire their indebtedness without abandoning their farms. In contrast to the weak-kneed provincial legislation, this act afforded a permanent solution to the indebtedness of thousands of farmers, and thereby greased the western Canadian farm machine for the inevitable period of economic recovery.

There remained a widespread need for working capital among the farmers of western Canada. The Dominion Government provided for this through the Canadian Farm Loan Act Amendment Act.[68] Under this act, loans were given to solvent farmers on the security of a second mortgage on real estate and of a mortgage on livestock and chattel. In the past, loans had only been given on the security of land and improvements. To assist those farmers who had made compositions with their creditors and therefore needed working capital, the act permitted loans to mortgagees on the security of the assignment or hypothecation of the first mortgage. The benefit to the mortgagee resulted from the continued operation of the farm. The Dominion Government, by becoming creditor to both the farmer and the credit company, provided relief to each and kept debtor-creditor relations more stable.

The change from a Conservative to a Liberal administration in Saskatchewan in 1934 was accompanied by a shift in economic policy. In 1936 Premier Patterson reached agreement with the Dominion Mortgage and Investments Association on a new scheme of voluntary debt adjustment.[69] Farmers in the designated drought area, which included Grasslands, were given substantial reductions in relief, tax and mortgage indebtedness. The provincial and federal governments cancelled all direct relief and agricultural assistance indebtedness. The province and the rural municipalities cancelled all tax arrears with the exception of "a sum equivalent to the latest two full years' levies unpaid as at July 1, 1936."[70] And finally, the mortgages and vendors cancelled all unpaid interest charges on farm mortgages and agreements of sale of land down to January 1, 1935. The outstanding principal and the interest for the years 1935 and 1936 were to be repaid over a period of ten years at six per cent interest per annum. These provisions did substantially reduce the indebtedness of many farmers. The bulk of their indebtedness, however, consisted of mortgages, personal loans, and outstanding accounts, and these could only be reduced by recourse to the Farmers' Creditors Arrangement Act.

The effect of these various provincial and federal debt adjustment schemes upon the farmers of Grasslands has yet to be documented. This hiatus notwithstanding, it is reasonable to assume that they had a pronounced impact in that area of western Canada. Repeated crop failures and a dearth of capital reserves made Grasslands farms so vulnerable to foreclosure and repossession that they had no alternative but to apply for such relief if they wished to continue their operations.

In conclusion, one can state unequivocally that positive government intervention prevented the total collapse of Grasslands society. The utilization of existing business outlets in the distribution of relief, grants to doctors and dentists, salaries for school teachers and loans to rural municipal councils all permitted routine activities to continue, albeit at a subdued level. Direct relief mitigated individual suffering. The provision of seed grain, machinery repairs, and feed and fodder for livestock arrested the physical deterioration of farm enterprises. But most importantly, debt relief schemes propped up the tottering local economy and without question saved the area from economic prostration. It is surely no coincidence that local farm abandonment never reached above a modest 13 per cent. It is also no coincidence that in the period 1926-41 the variation in field crop acreage from one quinquennial year to the next never exceeded 11 per cent.[71] Without positive government intervention, Grasslands farming enterprises would not have survived the Depression. And without the survival of local farmers, Grasslands would have become a wasteland.

New Directions in Dryland Farming

The 1930s imposed a tremendous financial burden upon all levels of government. The Dominion Government, which shouldered most relief expenses and saved several provinces from bankruptcy, was especially cognizant of the cost. Between 1930 and 1937 Ottawa spent 425 million dollars on relief works.[72] The magnitude of this expenditure, together with the incalculable social costs of the Depression, prompted a reconsideration of the role of government in Canada. The passive benevolence of relief was gradually supplemented by aggressive programs designed to prevent this economic and social collapse from recurring.

To deal with the problem of western Canada's drought belt, the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act (PFRA) was passed in 1935. Its farmers perceived the tragedy of the West in very narrow terms. According to A. Stewart, the provisions of the act,

> suggest that the problem was considered to be one of drought and of soil deterioration, which might be successfully solved by the provision of water, methods of moisture conservation, soil-drifting control, cultural practices, etc.[73]

It was not until two years later that the act was amended to deal with the questions of land utilization and settlement as well. This belated recognition of the fact that an improper distribution of resources had as much to do with the calamity as climatic conditions was a tacit admission of the government's partial responsibility for prevailing conditions. The fallacy of 'effective settlement' under the Dominion Lands Policy had become self-evident.

The objectives of the rehabilitation act demanded that its administrative arm work closely with the staff of the Dominion experimental stations. These two bodies were responsible for the supervision of all work carried out under the act. Fortunately it was realized that to be truly effective, the rehabilitation act had to involve the farmers of the drought belt. This was accomplished in two ways. First, agreement was reached with 30 or 40 farmers to use their farms as experimental substations. These substations, as C.H. Anderson has commented,

> became centers for the development of the most effective soil conservation practices within their districts, covering a wide range of soil conditions and climates. Each substation served its district as a test center from which recommendations were made on the cultural practices and crop varieties best suited to those districts. As soil drifting was controlled on the substations neighboring farmers copied the methods, and their successes were, in turn, noted and used by others.[74]

This was an effective method of teaching new cultural practices to farmers who were naturally reluctant to give up their old ways, without giving the impression of paternalism. The second means of reaching local farmers was through the organization of agricultural improvement associations, which were designed to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences relating to farming methods. Stewart notes that in 1938 there was 155 of these agricultural improvement association locals organized throughout the drought belt; at least five of these were in the Grasslands area.[75]

Under the terms of the 1935 act, agricultural researchers focused their attention on the problems of soil drifting and water conservation. Their research was conducted in conjunction with extensive soil surveying, done between 1935 and 1939, which was intended to supply information on,

> the moisture requirements of various crops, the susceptibility of various soil types to drifting, the effect of drifting on soil fertility, the effect of different devices and practices on wind erosion and evaporation, the analysis of soils, fodder, and water, etc.[76]

With respect to soil drifting, it was found that different implements could substantially reduce the amount of erosion. Instead of using the moldboard plough, disc harrows, and the spike-tooth cultivator, which pulverized the soil and made it more susceptible to drifting, scientists recommended equipment like the one-way disc, duck-foot cultivator, and the rod weeder which left the soil cloddy and covered with stubble and weed trash. Further control of drifting was obtained through the introduction of strip farming, whereby alternate strips of fallow and crop were maintained at right angles to the prevailing winds. The planting of shelterbelts of trees and thick hedges provided additional control. Water conservation in this period was done on a small scale. In an attempt to conserve spring runoff water for domestic, stock-watering, and irrigation purposes,[77] the government supplied engineering advice about, and funding for, individual construction of dugouts, stock-watering dams and small irrigation schemes.

The important shift to a consideration of land utilization which occurred in 1937 was the result of the soil surveying and of surveys done on thousands of individual farm operations in 1935 and 1936. The information obtained made it abundantly clear that a better utilization of existing resources would contribute to a more stable economy in the drought belt. The problem lay not so much with those lands suitable for cereal production, where different cultivation practices and erosion control measures were all that was needed to make local farms economically feasible; rather it involved farmland which should never have been cultivated because of its extremely low agricultural capability. As will be recalled from previous chapters, vast tracts in the Grasslands area fall into the latter category.

The first task was reclamation of land which had suffered most from wind erosion and abandonment. The government's handling of this problem has been described by Anderson:

> there were some farms where wind erosion was so severe that the land was finally abandoned and the ownership was turned over to the municipalities to pay the back taxes. These lands became a menace to adjoining farms. The PFRA, by agreement with the municipalities and provinces, took over management of these properties, brought the soil drifting under control, and seeded the eroded areas to perennial grass, usually crested wheatgrass. In localities of sandy soil and dry climate, sometimes the entire property was submarginal for growing grain. In these cases, the lands were deeded to the federal government, who in turn developed them as community pastures.[78]

The job is easier to write about than it was to accomplish. In the vicinity of Cadillac, for instance, some stretches of land had drifted to a depth of four to five feet.[79] Near Ponteix, a highway was so completely drifted over in spots that it could not be used; it was later abandoned.[80]

The reclamation of severely eroded land and its conversion into rangeland was seen as a key to diversifying the agricultural economy of the drought belt. The land required for community pastures as they became known, was obtained by surrender, exchange for other land, or lease.[81] Once the area was fenced and provided with stock-watering facilities, neighboring farmers were organized into a grazing association. The council of this association controlled grazing within the pasture. One such scheme was tried near Val Marie and 150,000 acres were set aside as rangeland.[82]

The development of community pastures was complemented by the construction of large-scale irrigation projects such as the one at Val Marie. In 1935 residents of the area petitioned through the Prairie Farmers Rehabilitation Act for assistance in the construction of a dam across the Frenchman River "so as to impound water in a reservoir to irrigate land in the valley flat below."[83] Construction of a dam, spillway, canals, laterals and timber structures was begun in the autumn of 1935 and almost completed a year later. Most of the work was done by local men with horses and served as a relief measure. The total capital cost was more than $214,000.[84] With a storage capacity of 7000 acre-feet of water, the dam served an irrigable area of 5500 acres.[85] In 1939 work was begun on a second dam called the West Val Marie project which was completed in 1941 and irrigated another 4000 acres.[86] These two projects not only provided water for livestock, they made possible the annual growth of tame grass and coarse grains in quantities sufficient to feed thousands of livestock where only 150 head had grazed just a few years before.[87]

Conclusion

Ten years of depression made clear the fragility of Grasslands agricultural underpinnings. An extremely low level of farm production, combined with the collapse in world markets, resulted in a general exhaustion of cash reserves, steady depreciation of farm holdings, and widespread public demoralization. In extreme cases residents reacted by abandoning their farms; in most other cases they decided to wait out the Depression and grudgingly accepted whatever palliatives government agencies held out to them.

All levels of government assisted as best they could. They offered direct relief, agricultural assistance, and debt adjustment programs, all of which provided immediate relief but no permanent solutions. Not until 1937 did the Dominion Government attempt to rectify the inexpedient distribution of Grasslands resources which was contributing to the instability of the local economy. For the first time in nearly 30 years it was recognized that thousands of acres in the area were satisfactory for little other than raising cattle. Had the government made this discovery earlier, and done something to correct it, the relief rolls might have been shortened. As it was, a great wastage of financial and human resources occurred.

Note on Sources

There exists an extensive and largely untapped fund of information on the Grasslands area during the Depression. Many of these records are on microfilm and this has precluded a thorough examination of them for use in this preliminary study. For the researcher with abundant time and resources they offer a detailed, almost overwhelming, chronicle of those ten years.

Most of the Saskatchewan government's relief records are housed at the Saskatchewan Archives at Regina. The remainder are at Saskatoon. These records are generally arranged by rural municipality and local improvement district as well as chronologically. To facilitate their use, the Archives Board has prepared a 97-page guide to them and their use. Obviously they cannot be listed here, but the most important among them may be noted.

The records of the Department of Agriculture are of great use. The Livestock Branch files, for example, contain information on the provision of hay and straw during the 1930s. In the Field Crops Branch files, one finds information on seed grain advances to drought areas since 1907-8, on pest control, and on soil drifting. In the Dairy Branch records (Saskatoon) there is material on the performance of local cheese factories, such as the one at Lisieux, during the Depression. But the Statistics Branch files are probably of most use to the researcher. These contain complete data on relief services provided since 1907, information of farm organization in the Thirties, expense accounts for relief roadwork, population statistics, and a plethora of valuable maps.

In the files of the Department of Municipal Affairs are reports of all provincial towns and villages between 1909 and 1945 which provide information on population movements, relief expenses, municipal financing, and related areas. By consulting the records of the Treasury Department, one can learn about irrigation at Val Marie and Eastend, the dynamics of relief administration, the total indebtedness of all rural municipalities and local improvements districts, and the operation of debt adjustment machinery between 1936 and 1939. The records of the Department of Education contain material about teacher's salaries during the Depression, the problems of school operation and administration, and individual inspector's reports about each school in the area. As this brief survey indicates, the records of virtually every government department contain material relating to some aspect of the Depression.

There are very few local histories and even fewer personal reminiscences which make detailed reference to the Depression. Consequently, information regarding individual persons or communities or districts can only be obtained in two ways. One is by interviewing survivors of the Depression who are willing to discuss the period. This may be more difficult than it seems. The second method involves use of observers' opinions and experiences. The MacRae-Scott material cited in the endnotes to the preceding chapter are one valuable though not altogether reliable source. The propaganda issued by the Red Cross for use in their campaign of relief is another source which must be used with caution. Of great assistance is the wealth of correspondence from local residents to the officials of the United Farmers of Canada, kept at Saskatoon. In most cases these letters are the secondhand observations of field workers for the United Farmers who are trying to obtain redress or amelioration for their local members. It must therefore be used with some caution, but it remains nonetheless the best source of information about individual circumstances.

There is fortunately a wealth of secondary material on specific topics related to the Depression, and this provides an excellent backdrop against which to discuss local events. Most of these works are listed in the endnotes to the chapter.

CHAPTER XIII THE POST-DEPRESSION DECADES

Introduction

The waning of laissez-faire agriculture followed the Great Depression in Canada. If ten consecutive years of drought and relief payments had any message for the Dominion Government, it was that the future performance of the nation's agricultural sector was largely dependent upon Ottawa's supervision of land utilization and stabilization of farm produce prices. Some halting steps in this direction had of course been taken since 1929, the most notable being the reintroduction of the Wheat Board on a voluntary basis in 1935 and the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act amendments of 1937. These and other government initiatives have caused some economic historians to glimpse the emergence of a new national policy toward agriculture in the 1930s.[1] It seems more reasonable, however, to view this early legislation as a balm for the economic and ecological wounds of the Depression rather than as a cure for the ailments of Canadian agriculture in an increasingly competitive world.

More substantial intervention in the national economy was justified by the emergencies of war time, and the agricultural sector was required to produce in the national interest. But instead of seizing this opportunity to formulate a comprehensive agricultural strategy for Canada, the government persisted in its use of makeshift programs. War-time government intervention in the agricultural sector effected a general diversification of prairie agriculture which led, in turn, to more stability in farm incomes. Diversification was not, however, the solution to the income instability of every agricultural area. In Grasslands, changing cost-price relations and national industrialization had a far greater impact.

Local service centres, always responsive to changes in the local agricultural economy, enjoyed prosperity during the war years. This growth was sustained in the 1950s by the increased stability of the hinterland. But changes in communications technology, increased population mobility, and the opportunities offered by a national industrial economy produced a marked redistribution of local urban residents after 1961.

World War II

The harvest of 1939 seemed to augur well for the next decade. Wheat production in Grasslands averaged over 19 bushels per acre, while oat yields ranged from 28 to 37 bushels per acre.[2] In the next year this production level was maintained and it seemed that the unfavorable conditions of the Thirties had run their course. Unfortunately this was not true and in five of the remaining nine years of the decade Grasslands farmers experienced serious crop failures.

The farmers were still burdened with debts incurred before and during the Depression. A study of real estate indebtedness in southwest central Saskatchewan in 1935 demonstrated that although farmers on rolling land and light soils were least in debt, they had received the least debt adjustment under provincial schemes.[3] There had been no protracted interlude of prosperity in which to retire these and any other debts which might be outstanding. It seems, in fact, that there is every reason to believe that Grasslands farmers were further in debt than they had ever been. The machinery and buildings which had become derelict during the past decade needed repair or replacement if farming was to continue. It is known that the horse population of Grasslands declined by over 40 per cent during the period 1941-46,[4] which clearly indicates that local farmers were turning to gasoline tractors for motive power. This would have added extra fuel and lubrication expenses. Furthermore, it is evident that although there was no expansion of improved farmland, a definite shift in farm ownership was taking place between 1941 and 1946.[5] The number of farm operators declined by about five per cent, while the number of farm owners increased by approximately the same percentage. Extant statistics make it clear that tenant farmers were being squeezed out by more prosperous farm owners, and that the process of farm consolidation was underway. These factors alone would be enough to seriously retard retirement of Depression indebtedness.

Those farmers who had chosen to participate in the government's irrigation scheme at Val Marie were not in much better financial condition than the majority of strictly grain farmers. This project, it will be recalled, was designed to lessen the dependency of farmers in times of drought and to diversify farm operations which were located on marginally productive land. In 1939 almost 2500 irrigated acres were leased to 23 local farmers.[6] Seven of the farmers signed leases with an option to purchase the acreage in the next year. An annual charge of .50¢ cents per irrigated acre was levied, and in cases of lease-option agreements this levy could be credited toward the purchase price. The water rental was $1.50 per acre. In other words, the average farmer was paying about $200. per year to participate in the project. They were expected to seed ten acres of alfalfa and a few acres to a pasture mixture. No water rental was charged on this acreage. Unfortunately in the summer of 1940 the crops were badly damaged by excessive rains and several leasing farmers gave up their interests in the project in order to save the land and water rentals for that year. Seven of the eight lease-options were taken up on an agreement for sale basis in 1940. Within two years only four of the original 23 farmers were still with the project. This initial failure has been attributed to worn-out machinery, lack of financial resources, and a persistent desire among participating farmers to grow cash grain crops.[7]

It seems evident that neither crop nor diversified farm operations could be successful in Grasslands until a substantial proportion of Depression indebtedness was retired. The way to accomplish this, as perceived by the farmers themselves, was to continue to grow cash grain crops. During the 1940s field crop acreage increased by 14 per cent to 82 000 acres.[8] The cattle population, after an initial rise between 1941 and 1946, declined markedly for a net increase of only seven pe. cent for the decade.[9] Reliance on grain production during this decade of capricious weather conditions left local farmers financially vulnerable. Government assistance again staved off economic collapse.

Towards Stability

In 1939 the Dominion Government instituted a form of insurance against crop failures and low agricultural prices through the Prairie Farm Assistance Act (PFAA). When low prices and low yields created a situation in which the cost of keeping a farmer in operation could not be borne by the individual, the municipality, or the province, the Dominion Government designated the situation a 'national emergency'. George Britnell has described the type of assistance which might be provided under the assistance act in an emergency year:

> if the average yield of wheat in any township is found ... to be not more than four bushels per acre the assistance given to each farmer in the township shall be two dollars an acre on one-half of his cultivated land up to a maximum of 400 acres ... Thus the maximum acreage on which a farmer can receive assistance is 200 and the maximum payment is $400. If the average yield in a township in such a year is over four but not more than eight bushels each farmer will receive $1.50 per acre on half his cultivated acreage up to 200 acres with a maximum payment of $300. If the average yield in a township is over eight but no more than twelve bushels, the entire basis for award is changed, each farmer to receive a payment of ten cents per acre 'for each cent, or fraction thereof, not exceeding ten, by which the average price is less than eighty cents per bushel'. On this basis the maximum that any farmer could receive would be $1.00 per acre on 200 acres or $200. No benefits are payable to the farmer in any township where the average yield of wheat is in excess of twelve bushels.[10]

Crop failure payments were made without regard to the price of wheat. Upon petition from the provincial government, Dominion authorities could declare a crop failure area in Saskatchewan if the average wheat yield in each of 135 townships was less than five bushels per acre. Awards were made in the amount of $200. per farmer, or at a rate of $2.50 per acre with respect to half the cultivated acreage of the farmer not to exceed 200 acres, whichever was greater.[11] The awards given to Grasslands municipalities under the assistance program are shown in the chart below. More than one million, eight hundred thousand dollars was given to Grasslands farmers in this form of assistance. In the same period about a hundred thousand dollars in direct relief and road relief payments were handed out.[12]

RM	1939-40	1940-41	1941-42	1942-43	1943-44	1944-45	1945-46
44	6486.	19621.	65240.	-	-	-	110042.
45	4853.	6381.	87437.	-	3337.	20272.	95489.
46	9495.	-	45983.	-	38476.	40953.	59876.
73	-	-	71810.	-	-	33477.	151852.
74	-	-	75462.	-	-	3445.	140365.
75	-	-	58082.	-	9192.	-	116607.
76	-	-	110927.	-	7447.	13755.	135580.
77	5762.	2705.	46294.	-	58166.	45436.	109616.
Total	26596.	28707.	561236.	-	116618.	157338.	919427.

Source: Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture, Statistics Branch, "Statistical Survey Files"

When the war began western farmers anticipated a substantial increase in world demand for wheat and so converted all available acreage to wheat production in an attempt to recoup their Depression losses. Although wheat delivery to elevators was restricted by a quota system after 1941, farmers continued to plant more wheat and by the next year the nation was faced with a prospective carryover of five hundred million bushels. Some curtailment of production was indicated and the Dominion Government introduced a wheat acreage reduction program (WAR).[13] The delivery quota system was supplemented with monetary bonuses for wheat acreage reduction. Four dollars per acre was awarded when the land was converted to summer-fallow and two dollars per acre when it was converted to coarse grains or grass. In addition, two dollars per acre was awarded for each acre summer-fallowed or seeded to coarse grains or grass in 1941 which was sown to grass or rye in 1942. This reduction program was maintained throughout the war not only to reduce wheat acreage but also to diversify western agriculture and make it less vulnerable to price fluctuations. Between 1941 and 1946 more than a million dollars in reduction payments were awarded to Grasslands farmers.[14]

The government had not anticipated lower yields due to climatic conditions and a poor crop in 1941 left farm incomes at a level that was less than desirable. Ottawa reacted by instituting an income supplement plan in the autumn of 1941.[15] Regardless of the yield or amount of crop harvested by any one farmer, he was to receive a bonus of .75¢ cents per acre on one-half his total cultivated acreage up to a maximum of $150. In 1941-42 Grasslands farmers received $322,198. under this plan.[16] While there is little evidence to rely upon, local farmers may have viewed this scheme as mere tokenism. In January, 1942, a local United Farmer director wrote to his superior that "In the district it [the bonus scheme] is far from satisfactory and [is] causing a great deal of trouble and hardships on [sic] some people."[17] It is not at all clear how the scheme could 'cause' hardships except by being inadequate to meet the income needs of farmers in desperate financial straits, a classification which would have included many local farmers as the relief payments of the period indicated.

The next harvest brought prosperity. A bumper wheat crop averaging 24 bushels to the acre was reaped and the following two years brought above average yields.[18] High wheat prices and government support of other farm produce prices permitted a reduction of Grasslands indebtedness and expansion of existing farm operations. Between 1946 and 1951 the horse population of the area declined by over 51 per cent again, suggesting that more farmers were purchasing gasoline tractors. In the same period the average local farm increased by about 350 acres as more farm owners rented acreage.[19] The amount of improved acreage showed an upward trend for the first time in five years.[20] Finally, although cattle numbers declined from their 1946 peak they still remained comparatively high for the area.[21] Obviously the long-delayed recovery was underway.

The trends of the immediate post-war years continued into the 1950s. A buoyant world market for agricultural products multiplied the purchasing power of Grasslands farmers. Presumably after they retired or consolidated their debts, farmers rented or purchased additional acreage. Between 1951 and 1956 the average Grasslands farm increased in size by almost 11 per cent to 1550 acres.[22] Expansion of farm operations was made possible by two factors. The first was the drawing power of urban industry which decreased the rural population by more than 27 per cent in the period 1946-56.[23] The second was the acquisition of larger, more efficient farm machinery. Local agriculture had rapidly become capital intensive.

Income stability was not achieved through radical diversification of farm operations. In 1951 about 75 per cent of the acreage sown to grain was in wheat; in 1956 the figure was 79 per cent.[24] In the same five-year period cattle production per farmer doubled to forty head,[25] but the returns from such small herds would not have formed a large proportion of total farm income. The number of hogs per farm increased from four to seven,[26] but again this would not have made much impact on earnings. Production of poultry had been decreasing since 1946 and continued to do so.[27] Clearly rising farm produce prices and a more cost-effective use of existing resources accounts for the greater stability of Grasslands farms after the Second World War.

One can only conclude that the government's war-time agricultural policies, while important in meeting national needs and preventing inflation, did little to promote economic development in Grasslands. The Prairie Farm Assistance Act, for example, stimulated uneconomic production by keeping farmers of marginal and submarginal land in operation.[28] Charles Schwartz, quoting a government official, wrote that "PFAA is intended to take care of people who were put on land that they should not have been put on."[29] The Prairie Farm Income Plan of 1941 did much the same thing. Government price supports and incentive schemes, on the other hand, were beneficial. But none of the programs struck at the primary obstacle to economic progress in the Grasslands area - overpopulation. As long as local resources were thinly spread, long-term financial security was beyond the reach of most Grasslands farmers.

The Population Shift

Increased economic stability among the agrarian population during the 1950s led to population growth in all Grasslands rural municipalities and also, presumably, in the two local improvement districts. Between 1946 and 1951 the cumulative urban population in the municipalities rose by almost 11 per cent, and in the next five years the increase was over 24 per cent.[30] This growth was not, however, spread uniformly among service centres. For example, among seven centres (Rockglen, Lisieux, Fir Mountain, Wood Mountain, Canopus, Quantock, and Killdeer) in the southeastern part of Grasslands in the period 1941-66, the cumulative population increased by more than two-thirds.[31] Rockglen, the largest community, was responsible for virtually all of the increase. The villages of Killdeer, Wood Mountain and Lisieux remained stable, while the village of Fir Mountain and the hamlet of Canopus lost more than half of their residents. Quantock, an unclassifiable centre consisting of a single grain elevator, managed to remain on the map. The same concentration of population can be observed in data concerning 23 incorporated centres in, or directly adjacent to, the Grasslands area.[32] From 1951 to 1961, 16 of these communities were growing while the remainder shrank in size; in the period 1961-71 only two were still growing.

Ironically, the same factors which produced comparative stability in the local agricultural economy contributed to the locally undesirable pattern of urban growth. The replacement of labor by capital on local farms decreased the number of customers which most centres served. The same urban/industrial job opportunities which lured many farmers and farm youths to the city attracted the younger generation of town-dwellers as well. But more important in shifting the population were ongoing changes in communications.

The mechanization of farming operation occurred coincidentally with the purchase of trucks and automobiles. This greatly increased the mobility of the local population. As Edmund Dale has written:

> increasingly the small towns have lost or are losing the support of the rural population which has become highly mobile, following the inexorable, universal march to the large urban centres. Those who choose to remain support the small towns to no greater degree. Improved highways and transportation by the automobile enhanced shopping in the larger centres, not merely for specialized goods and services which are unobtainable at the local centre, but for goods which could be obtained locally including groceries and farm equipment. Unpatronized, the local business, which is taxed to provide services for the local area, soon closes its doors and adds to local deterioration.[33]

The element of loyalty to a local merchant has been displaced by the attractiveness and variety of the larger centre.

The improved road system to which Dale alludes has also been responsible for decreased rail traffic on local lines, since most goods are now shipped by transport truck. In some areas grain is the only commodity still shipped by rail, and local production is sometimes not sufficient to justify continued rail service. This is what happened to the Killdeer spur-line, for example, and the Hall Commission on Grain Transportation and Handling has recommended its abandonment.

Increased mobility and government policies have effected a centralization of school facilities. In 1969 there were primary schools in five of the seven local communities in the Rockglen area. Two high schools also served the area, one at Rockglen and the other at Wood

Mountain. Of the district's 716 students, over 60 per cent attended school at Rockglen.[34] If one adds the number attending at Wood Mountain, the figure becomes 80 per cent. The problem is serious, for declining school facilities adversely affect shopping and recreation in small centres.[35]

The impact of changing communications media must also be considered. From the 1940s onward, an increasing number of local newspapers have been printed at Moose Jaw.[36] This trend may have induced local publishers to solicit advertising from Moose Jaw businesses which, in turn, would affect local consumer expectations. The geographical spread of Regina's daily newspaper unquestionably had the same effect. The start of a radio broadcasting station at Gravelbourg in the early 1950s provided another advertising medium for business persons in that town, and may help to explain Gravelbourg's prosperity in that decade. Television, a phenomenon of the late fifties and early sixties in rural areas, has also had a decided impact on local expectations.

The aspirations of small-town business people have been dashed by the depopulation of the countryside and by the changing expectations of rural residents. Barring massive governmental assistance, communities of less than 2000 people will continue to decline.

Conclusion

The last quarter century has brought extensive change to the Grasslands area. In spite of continuing government intervention in the local agricultural economy, an equilibrium of land and people has finally been reached. The excess population with which Grasslands has always been burdened has largely been absorbed by the larger industrial centres of western Canada. Small towns have suffered as a consequence, but this only points out the folly of the excessive optimism of their founders. The myopia of 1908 has finally been corrected.

TABLES

Unless otherwise indicated, the following tables are based on information for eight rural municipalities (RM) in Grasslands. These are Wise Creek (#77), Auvergne (#76), Pinto Creek (#75), Wood River (#74), Stonehenge (#73), Glen McPherson (#46), Mankota (#45), and Waverley (#44).

Table 1. Number of farm operators, 1921-56

RM	1921	1926	1931	1936	1941	1946	1951	1956
44	414	377	409	372	363	353	259	255
45	377	378	478	380	383	322	277	251
46	215	223	362	252	250	229	160	132
73	569	546	606	554	528	506	428	366
74	482	436	480	471	439	443	330	323
75	440	379	379	349	358	350	296	262
76	443	349	383	377	380	380	320	311
77	357	448	419	362	345	315	264	224
Total	3297	3136	3516	3117	3046	2898	2334	2124

PERIOD	PERCENTAGE OF CHANGE
1921-26	-4.88
1926-31	+12.11
1931-36	-11.34
1936-41	-2.27
1941-46	-4.85
1946-51	-19.46
1951-56	-8.99

SOURCE: AS (Regina) Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture, Statistics Branch, "Statistical Survey Files".

Table 2. Field crop acreages by rural municipality, 1921-56

Year	44	45	46	73	74	75	76	77
1921	41082	50592	27389	101817	90186	88394	87523	55475
1926	55676	64637	34522	127314	98097	97924	78010	71139
1931	68209	68970	37786	131131	110128	93382	91208	65682
1936	66550	77947	42974	126587	102516	87674	85310	73873
1941	56151	74644	39056	110817	87786	79286	76985	67488
1946	63285	66549	41063	120855	93614	77966	82093	69685
1951	68386	86154	42341	127194	99575	87837	92334	72613
1956	69399	82460	41665	124336	101078	88965	98215	72116

Source: AS (Regina) Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture Statistics Branch, "Statistical Survey Files."

Table 3. Spring wheat acreages by rural municipality, 1921-56

RM	1921	1926	1931	1936	1941	1946	1951	1956
44	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
45	34343	47688	56887	63535	57331	44635	68130	68245
46	19763	26822	32715	34853	29543	28336	31741	33500
73	71950	100113	105121	103451	87006	82161	101751	93415
74	65535	75445	89981	86376	72048	66747	NA	81115
75	64349	77608	74265	69921	64422	56987	72249	75445
76	66099	64146	72908	70903	63037	59102	76703	87118
77	40149	59123	56614	60911	56328	41299	53475	59900
TOTAL	362188	450945	488491	434098	429715	394296	404049	498740

SOURCE: AS (Regina) Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture, Statistics Branch, "Statistical Survey Files."

Table 4. Urban population expressed as a percentage of total by rural municipality

	Rural Municipality							
Year	44	45	46	73	74	75	76	77
1921	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.1	21.5	28.7	23.8	25.6
1926	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	25.6	36.6	36.9	25.2
1931	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.8	26.6	32.8	32.1	24.5
1936	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.7	27.3	34.0	34.3	23.6
1941	0.0	9.4	0.0	11.7	30.2	36.5	38.6	25.4
1946	0.0	14.6	0.0	13.8	32.3	41.3	40.9	30.8
1951	15.0	21.8	0.0	14.5	38.6	49.1	49.6	39.1
1956	15.9	31.6	0.0	15.8	44.5	50.4	56.5	44.3

SOURCE: AS (Regina) Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture, Statistics Branch, "Statistical Survey Files."

Table 5. Horse population by rural municipality

Year	44	45	46	73	74	75	76	77
1931	3268	3625	2572	4304	3505	3364	3250	2885
1936	2198	2950	2110	3214	2450	2098	2270	2288
1941	2121	2338	1686	2329	1307	1499	1681	1724
1946	1300	1290	1281	1485	654	762	1087	937
1951	585	647	498	699	342	378	441	368
1956	315	375	368	307	140	186	305	195

SOURCE: AS (Regina) Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture, Statistics Branch, "Statistical Survey Files."

Table 6. Cattle population by rural municipality

Year	44	45	46	73	74	75	76	77
1931	2057	2147	1556	2263	1793	2027	2038	2149
1936	3156	3260	3050	2920	2512	2419	2708	2802
1941	3213	3075	2418	2926	1869	3268	2388	1624
1946	4842	3899	4191	3693	2677	2639	3580	2081
1951	3735	3991	3163	2964	1852	2420	2468	1672
1956	7930	7418	6825	4647	3452	4620	4697	3303

SOURCE: AS (Regina) Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture, Statistics Branch, "Statistical Survey Files."

Table 7. Population of incorporated urban centres, 1921-56

RM	1921	1926	1931	1936	1941	1946	1951	1956
44	0	0	0	0	0	0	146	145
45	0	0	0	0	167	233	319	461
46	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
73	324	422	350	307	296	281	240	239
74	549	778	741	678	667	624	691	822
75	660	911	846	692	691	682	666	712
76	551	924	814	807	824	827	891	1144
77	369	474	458	406	376	385	382	452
TOTAL	2453	3509	3209	2890	3021	3032	3335	3975

PERIOD	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
1921-26	+43.04
1926-31	-8.54
1931-36	-9.94
1936-41	+4.53
1941-46	+0.36
1946-51	+9.99
1951-56	+19.19

SOURCE: AS (Regina) Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture, Statistics Branch, "Statistical Survey Files."

Table 8. **Direct relief expenditures by rural municipality, 1929-39, (all figures rounded off to the nearest dollar)**

Year	44	45	46	73	74	75	76	77	TOTALS
1929-30	58	0	0	0	0	26409	0	0	26467
1930-31	16724	16873	6089	3651	15198	15982	15691	13310	103518
1931-32	59289	63589	37547	72265	88563	76268	79906	51820	529247
1932-33	49661	56966	19038	51271	70167	62024	54148	9538	372813
1933-34	69074	73383	34762	91390	91776	73846	71784	39876	545891
1934-35	66979	76574	39904	95732	88757	75300	73970	49849	567065
1935-36	31491	15729	11391	53254	39265	25471	29425	10050	216076
1936-37	81858	96780	54976	105814	94888	68620	95735	76968	675639
1937-38	94365	111691	57167	146467	119946	87697	104224	84904	806461
1938-39	53785	60826	33868	100926	76793	51946	62807	54130	495081
TOTALS	523284	572411	294742	720770	685353	563563	587690	390445	$4338258

SOURCE: Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture, Statistics Branch. "Relief Services Files, 1907-41."

Table 9. Direct relief dollars per capita by rural municipality

RM	1931	1936
44	$9.98	$20.62
45	8.82	8.32
46	6.18	12.83
73	1.27	20.83
74	7.44	21.74
75	9.23	18.98
76	9.11	19.02
77	9.43	7.66
AVERAGE	$7.68	$16.25

SOURCE: AS (Regina) Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture, Statistics Branch, "Relief Services Files, 1907-41."

Table 10. Medical relief payments by rural municipality, 1929-39

RM	Amount ($)
44	75.00
45	2,654.00
46	478.71
73	4,150.02
74	100.00
75	5,112.32
76	75.00
77	278.00
TOTAL	12,923.05

SOURCE: AS (Regina) Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture, Statistics Branch, "Relief Services Files, 1907-41."

Table 11. Educational relief payments by rural municipality, 1929-39

RM	Amount ($)
44	19,552.17
45	7,663.03
46	11,378.34
73	9,697.33
74	21,880.24
75	16,787.33
76	14,518.99
77	20,446.50
TOTAL	121,923.93

SOURCE: AS (Regina) Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture. Statistics Branch, "Relief Services Files, 1907-41."

Table 12. Guaranteed municipal loans by rural municipality, 1929-39

RM	Amount ($)
44	212,877.74
45	174,131.99
46	60,435.76
73	177,168.63
74	229,483.36
75	131,839.27
76	122,281.79
77	76,172.26
TOTAL	1,184,390.80

SOURCE: AS (Regina) Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture. Statistics Branch, "Relief Services Files, 1907-41."

Table 13. Agricultural assistance by rural municipality, 1929-39 (all figures rounded off to the nearest dollar)

Year	44	45	46	73	74	75	76	77	TOTALS
1929-30	1998	1367	0	4459	0	0	0	0	7824
1930-31	28014	14325	6521	2496	14428	36343	15627	19715	137469
1931-32	161258	175555	96083	147043	172664	245152	237855	143020	1378630
1932-33	39077	34246	6041	38144	59933	59082	25191	4653	266367
1933-34	90749	83586	29667	131039	120673	107605	84202	44926	692447
1934-35	92065	91234	40025	131589	150007	106490	109707	66307	787424
1935-36	29243	7357	8415	48571	52676	31937	30471	12759	221429
1936-37	95829	103275	79339	107519	113677	83441	134514	127869	845463
1937-38	190229	214699	125818	295269	239198	195203	200274	182096	1642786
1938-39	6000	5046	2721	20821	10915	5976	5000	7366	63845
TOTALS	734462	730690	394630	926950	934171	871229	842841	608711	6043684

SOURCE: Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture, Statistics Branch, "Relief Services Files, 1907-41."

Table 14. Seeding and seed grain relief payments by rural municipality, 1929-39

RM	Amount ($)
44	380,783.94
45	383,139.20
46	206,037.34
73	559,535.65
74	563,785.80
75	480,404.14
76	482,496.07
77	328,350.63
TOTAL	3,384,532.80

SOURCE: AS (Regina) Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture, Statistics Branch, "Relief Services Files, 1907-41."

Table 15. Binder twine relief payments by rural municipality, 1929-39

RM	Amount ($)
44	878.50
45	2,688.51
46	4,439.82
73	8,360.68
74	6,098.43
75	72.28
76	6,179.64
77	7,879.81
TOTAL	36,597.97

SOURCE: AS (Regina) Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture, Statistics Branch, "Relief Services Files, 1907-41."

Table 16. Gasoline, oil, and sundry relief payments by rural municipality, 1929-39

RM	Amount ($)
44	7,659.42
45	4,435.16
46	1,763.48
73	14,568.09
74	16,314.85
75	10,226.64
76	8,990.35
77	4,924.27
TOTAL	68,882.26

SOURCE: AS (Regina) Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture, Statistics Branch, "Relief Services Files, 1907-41."

Table 17. Feed and fodder relief payments by rural municipality, 1929-39

RM	Amount ($)
44	342,187.25
45	337,142.56
46	181,583.75
73	341,834.10
74	347,671.07
75	379,121.45
76	343,759.45
77	266,780.85
TOTAL	2,540,080.50

SOURCE: AS (Regina) Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture, Statistics Branch, "Relief Services Files, 1907-41."

Table 18. Average wheat yields, 1928-56

Year	Yield In Bushels	Year	Yield In Bushels
1928	25.5	1943	14.4
1929	5.0	1944	12.4
1930	3.8	1945	5.1
1931	.3	1946	4.9
1932	4.0	1947	10.1
1933	2.4	1948	8.4
1934	2.1	1949	1.9
1935	9.1	1950	14.8
1936	1.7	1951	13.0
1937	0.0	1952	21.0
1938	6.6	1953	23.5
1939	19.1	1954	13.4
1940	18.2	1955	20.7
1941	6.7	1956	22.7
1942	24.0		

SOURCE: AS (Regina) Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture, Statistics Branch, "Statistical Survey Files."

Table 19. Number of farm owners, 1921-56

RM	1921	1926	1931	1936	1941	1946	1951	1956
44	350	299	295	225	162	179	259	255
45	289	261	369	195	175	158	124	136
46	169	160	238	103	102	91	43	29
73	496	358	436	337	304	313	239	188
74	366	287	314	273	230	240	206	192
75	318	258	246	173	164	173	141	123
76	364	230	247	203	175	204	176	173
77	283	352	257	185	129	148	121	115
TOTAL	2635	2205	2402	1694	1441	1508	1160	1070

PERIOD	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
1921-26	-16.31
1926-31	+ 8.93
1931-36	-29.47
1936-41	-14.93
1941-46	+ 4.64
1946-51	-23.07
1951-56	- 7.75

SOURCE: AS (Regina) Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture, Statistics Branch, "Statistical Survey Files."

Table 20. Number of tenant farmers by rural municipality, 1921-56

RM	1921	1926	1931	1936	1941	1946	1951	1956
44	37	36	46	80	97	89	43	37
45	27	39	52	100	106	67	44	26
46	13	13	27	51	67	55	31	13
73	48	84	95	117	129	97	86	57
74	64	84	102	127	123	117	55	44
75	56	76	62	85	114	92	65	48
76	49	57	65	106	128	97	63	47
77	21	70	70	80	117	77	60	29
TOTAL	315	535	519	746	881	691	447	301

PERIOD	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
1921-26	+69.84
1926-31	- 2.99
1931-36	+43.73
1936-41	+18.09
1941-46	-21.56
1946-51	-35.31
1951-56	-32.66

SOURCE: AS (Regina) Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture, Statistics Branch, "Statistical Survey Files."

Table 21. Agricultural payments by rural municipality, 1939-46 (all figures rounded to the nearest dollar)

RM	PFAA	PFI	WAR
44	$201,390	$31,555	$137,898
45	217,769	39,379	128,470
46	194,783	40,712	79,194
73	257,139	55,120	211,638
74	219,272	48,697	179,947
75	183,881	38,001	135,179
76	267,710	39,069	140,511
77	158,362	29,665	90,398
TOTAL	1,700,306	322,198	1,103,235

SOURCE: AS (Regina) Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture, Statistics Branch, "Relief Services Files, 1907-41."

Table 22. Average grasslands farm size, 1921-56

Year	Farm Operators	Total Acreage	Acreage/Operator
1921	3297	1130904	343.01
1926	3136	1313639	418.88
1931	3516	1594579	453.52
1936	3117	1525753	489.49
1941	1441	1586585	1101.03
1946	1508	1589621	1054.12
1951	1160	1624328	1400.28
1956	1070	1659537	1550.96

SOURCE: AS (Region) Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture, Statistics Branch, "Statistical Survey Files."

Table 23. Number of farm tenant-owners by rural municipality, 1921-56

RM	1921	1926	1931	1936	1941	1946	1951	1956
44	27	42	68	67	104	85	106	104
45	61	78	57	85	102	97	109	89
46	33	50	97	98	81	83	86	90
73	25	104	75	100	95	96	103	121
74	52	65	64	71	86	86	69	87
75	66	81	71	91	80	85	90	91
76	30	62	71	68	77	79	81	91
77	53	26	92	97	99	90	83	80
TOTAL	347	508	595	677	724	701	727	753

PERIOD	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
1921-26	+46.39
1926-31	+17.12
1931-36	+14.28
1936-41	+ 6.94
1941-46	- 3.17
1946-51	+ 3.70
1951-56	+ 3.57

SOURCE: AS (Regina) Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture, Statistics Branch, "Statistical Survey Files."

Table 24. Acreage of improved farm land by rural municipality, 1921-56

RM	1921	1926	1931	1936	1941	1946	1951	1956
44	64964	85684	119724	112815	114141	116042	141673	132596
45	76964	93121	128304	119679	126438	113098	136744	138378
46	37671	48717	72714	69326	70771	71466	68585	70419
73	151661	189697	208650	207409	211826	204812	207297	204743
74	141692	152198	177834	177296	178508	176430	176363	179183
75	131742	147066	157381	154299	153914	157821	158330	163396
76	123546	113723	157417	149524	153238	156168	157605	171696
77	76842	90261	122266	118005	120080	121467	119032	123110
TOTAL	805082	920467	1144290	1108353	1128916	1117304	1165629	1183521

SOURCE: AS (Regina) Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture.
Statistics Branch, "Statistical Survey Files."

Table 25. Rural population by rural municipality, 1921-56

RM	1921	1926	1931	1936	1941	1946	1951	1956
44	1191	1407	1675	1527	1391	1049	828	768
45	1309	1595	1913	1890	1619	1366	1147	997
46	817	913	984	888	757	643	476	427
73	2364	2959	2883	2557	2235	1756	1417	1278
74	2003	2257	2042	1806	1544	1309	1099	1026
75	1637	2030	1736	1342	1203	971	690	701
76	1765	1582	1723	1547	1313	1163	905	882
77	1175	1406	1411	1312	1107	865	597	568
TOTAL	12261	14149	14367	12869	11169	9122	7159	6647

PERIOD	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
1921-26	+15.39
1926-31	+ 1.54
1931-36	-10.42
1936-41	-13.21
1941-46	-18.32
1946-51	-21.51
1951-56	- 7.15

SOURCE: AS (Regina) Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture,
Statistics Branch, "Statistical Survey Files."

Table 26. Swine population by rural municipality, 1931-56

RM	1931	1936	1941	1946	1951	1956
44	1730	1009	1605	587	369	851
45	1652	1352	1920	573	556	849
46	415	490	945	272	295	561
73	2025	1375	2490	1088	925	1225
74	1723	1252	1888	880	868	1057
75	1977	1155	2192	788	759	1150
76	1716	1546	2168	885	549	1176
77	962	716	1233	635	487	656
TOTAL	12200	8895	14441	5708	4808	7525

SOURCE: AS (Regina) Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture, Statistics Branch, "Statistical Survey Files."

Table 27. Poultry population by rural municipality, 1931-56

RM.	1931	1936	1941	1946	1951	1956
44	36705	26084	26318	26624	15177	15920
45	35188	31652	30009	29692	18272	15474
46	19370	17145	17094	16089	9392	9273
73	57909	48600	49892	70830	41783	35900
74	43071	37957	32783	36055	24017	24790
75	40935	34199	29446	27872	21192	17988
76	35983	31510	31238	31071	18685	20318
77	32841	26732	28452	25762	14199	11159
TOTAL	302002	253879	245232	263995	162717	150822

SOURCE: AS (Regina) Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture, Statistics Branch, "Statistical Survey Files."

Table 28. Direct relief and miscellaneous relief by rural municipality, 1939-46, (all figures rounded to nearest dollar)

RM	Amount ($)
44	11,751
45	5,978
46	2,983
73	5,590
74	12,466
75	4,298
76	15,624
77	48,613
TOTAL	107,303

SOURCE: AS (Regina) Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture, Statistics Branch, "Relief Services File, 1907-41."

APPENDIX A. A SURVEY OF THE HISTORY OF THE COAL CREEK COLONY 1929-38

Introduction

James B. Hedges, the authority on Canadian Pacific Railway Company land policies and practices, once asserted that "In one respect, the work of the Canadian Pacific was unique among the land grant railways in North America. Other companies sold land; the Canadian Pacific actually colonized it."[1] Hedges based this statement primarily on the company's colonization work in Alberta, where "it not only undertook to develop irrigation on a gigantic scale, but also ... finding its plans foiled by the ubiquitous speculator who refused to occupy the lands he had purchased from the railway, the Company gradually developed a scheme which included ready-made farms and loans to settlers, together with free instruction and training."[2] Hedges used the (relative) success of such projects as a justification for the large amounts of land which the Dominion Government had granted to the CPR. There is more than a grain of truth in this argument. Even its most rabid critics must admit that the company played an important role in the process of western settlement. At the same time, however, the CPR's record was not unblemished. One of these black marks was the disastrous attempt to found a colony along Coal Creek in southwestern Saskatchewan in the late 1920s.

The short history of the Coal Creek colony, located in Township 1, Range 2 West of the Third Meridian (1-2 W3) south of the present town of Killdeer in the period 1929-38, contains many elements of interest. It was one of the last of the CPR's "ready-made farm" colonies, and was situated in an area totally different from that in which previous ones had been located. It was planned and operated in conjunction with the British government during one of the latter's last forays into the assisted emigration of its people. Lastly, its foundation - in one of the most drought-prone sections of the west - coincided with the beginnings of the drought and depression of the Thirties. The story of the colony has been hidden in that of this greater disaster, to the extent that references to it are almost nonexistent. Hedges, for example, briefly (and ambiguously) mentions the agreement which created the colony, but not the colony itself. The following examination is based almost entirely on the CPR records on deposit at the Glenbow-Alberta Institute Archives. Insofar as could be determined, this is the first full account of the colony's history.

The CPR and Assisted Settlement

In return for its construction of the first transcontinental rail line and sundry branches, the CPR from 1881 to 1894 was granted some 26 million acres of Dominion land.[3] Most of this was in the prairie provinces. The actual selection of these lands took a considerable time, and the disposal of them even longer. In selling them (especially after early financial crises) the company had one major aim: to promote settlement which would generate traffic for its lines. Their cash value, while significant, paled by comparison with the potential returns from freight revenue.[4] From the first the company therefore offered the best prices on its lands to persons willing to cultivate and live on them. In fact, in 1881-82[5] and after 1913,[6] the CPR attempted to follow a policy of selling only to *bona fide* users. In the period between these dates substantial discounts were given to settlers able to show cultivation. The margin between a speculator and a settler, however, was often a slim one and, in any case, the rate of failure among actual settlers was consistently high. While the company's ordinary sales program was not an unmitigated failure, neither was it an unqualified success.[7]

Having actual settlers on its lands, regardless of immediate returns, was in itself of benefit to the company. Given the fact that many potential settlers were deterred by a lack of capital or expertise, and that settlers relying entirely on their own resources ran a high risk of failure, the "assisted settlement" programs initiated by the CPR in the early 1900s were an eminently logical development. Two major plans were offered. The first, the Crop Payment Plan, was aimed at Americans with prairie farming experience. It allowed a settler to acquire CPR land with a small down-payment, and to pay off the balance of his debt in installments, the size of which was tied directly to his success in production.[8] The second plan was the "ready-made farm," aimed primarily at British settlers. The basic idea was to provide suitable candidates with enough land, equipment and improvements to establish a feasible operation. The farms were generally grouped in colonies, since mutual assistance among settlers had long been proven an important factor in successful settlement. The cost of the land, and other assistance would be repaid on a long-term basis; with the proviso that as long as the settler continued to occupy and work his land he would not be foreclosed, regardless of fluctuations in his fortunes.[9]

The first ready-made farm colony was laid out at Nightingale, Alberta in 1909, with the British settlers coming out in the spring of 1910. On their arrival they found crops planted, houses built, wells prepared and horses and equipment waiting. Each settler had to have about $1500, while the company provided up to $1000 in improvements and, of course, the land. This colony, like later ones, was located on one of the CPR's irrigation blocks, and the farms were small. In most cases the company considered 80 to 120 acres an adequate farm in an irrigated area. Certainly, this allowed more settlers to be concentrated in one location than the usual 160- to 320-acre prairie farm pattern. A temporary shortage of prepared irrigation land, however, led the CPR to establish its next ready-made farm colonies in a dryland farming region. Two were established at Sedgwick, Alberta in 1910 and 1911. They provided a total of 122 farms ranging in size from 160 to 349 acres. Prices ranged from $13 to $20 per acre, in addition to which the settler had to pay for $2000 to $2500 worth of improvements per farm. The CPR maintained a schedule of frequent inspections to check on and assist the farmers' progress.[10] Since it controlled all of the land in each colony, the company also subsidized schools, churches and other such institutions.[11]

Subsequent ready-made farm colonies were located in the irrigation blocks.[12] The Nightingale pattern was repeated, but the basic farm size was increased to 160 acres in 1912, to allow for the fact that most 80-acre units did not necessarily contain 80 acres of usable farm land.[13] By 1919 the CPR had provided 762 ready-made farms to British settlers. As early as 1914, however, problems with the program were becoming obvious. Although the first two colonies did well, later ones suffered from a high rate of abandonment by the immigrants. Company officials mainly attributed this to the low standards of selection exercised by their representatives in Britain, who allowed people with inadequate means and/or the requisite background to enlist. And, as Hedges noted (paraphrasing a CPR official), "Even with company assistance there was no substitute for the spirit of enterprise, adaptability, and the will to succeed."[14] The scheme was pronounced a failure. The interruption of immigration during the war dealt a further blow to the program.

With these difficulties, the ready-made farm scheme would probably have died a natural death by 1920. Two new conditions, however, led to its continuation in the post-war period. The first of these was the fact that, while the CPR had a great deal of land left to sell, fewer new settlers were coming to western Canada to sell it to; especially after Canada undertook a restrictive immigration policy in 1919. Moreover, much of the remaining land was of a lower quality than had previously been available and "could be sold and settled only by the adoption of novel and extraordinary measures" by the company.[15] This meant, in effect, that some form of assisted settlement would probably be needed. The second factor was the willingness of the British government to subsidize emigration to its overseas dominions and territories. In 1922 the Empire Settlement Act was passed. This allowed for grants to assist emigration, including subsidies for passage and settlement on the land.[16] These grants were administered by the Overseas Settlement Committee of the Overseas Settlement Department of the Dominions Office. The act gave rise to several settlement agreements between the British and Canadian governments[17] and, beginning in 1925, between the CPR and the British Government.

A renewed CPR ready-made farm program played a major role in the last-mentioned agreements. The focus of operations once again was the company's lands in Alberta. In 1925 a Scottish group colony was successfully established at Clan Donald. This was enlarged in 1928 and, in the same year, yet another colony was established near Vermilion, as a joint venture by the CPR, Hudson's Bay Company and the British Government.[18] The terms and conditions of these colonization programs were very similar to those before the war. At about this time, however, the CPR and British Government apparently rediscovered the fact that British settlers needed more experience before being launched into their new lives as prairie farmers. In 1928 the company and the Overseas Settlement Committee reached two new agreements; the "Hundred Cottage Scheme" and the "Thousand Settler Scheme." Both specified that new settlers be given agricultural work and supervision before being helped to select their own farms. As Hedges notes, "the provision for farm training was a frank recognition of the fact that British settlers adapted themselves to prairie conditions less readily than did families from the continent of Europe."[19] The main "cottage" colonies were at Earlie, Alberta.

The influx of would-be farmers resulting from these training schemes may have been the motivating force for the establishment of Coal Creek in 1928. Once these people had gone through their 'apprenticeships', prepared farms would be required. The timing of the relevant agreement suggests this. On 24 August 1928[20] a joint agreement, known as the "200 Farm Settlement Scheme," was signed by the CPR, Hudson's Bay Company and the British Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs. Each of the first two parties agreed to provide 100 farms (size unspecified) with a maximum of $1200 worth of improvements per farm,[21] for British families. The Dominion Office, in turn, would provide a maximum of $800 per family for livestock and agricultural and domestic equipment. In addition, each family would be provided with $250 in start-up funds ($200 by the Overseas Settlement Committee and $50 by the company). A ceiling of $5000 in aid per family (apparently including the price of the land and future assistance) was set. By the end of 1929 the Hudson's Bay Company had all 100 of its farms in operation. The CPR supplied 37 (at Coal Creek) in 1929, and a further 53 (at Earlie) in 1930.[22] If supplying ready-made farms for 'cottagers' was the purpose of the CPR's part of the scheme, however, their selection of Coal Creek as one of the company's sites was somewhat odd. For that matter Coal Creek was an anomaly in more ways than one.

Coal Creek: Location and Arrangement

If the CPR, in creating the Coal Creek colony, deliberately set out to break most of the rules and precedents derived from its 20 years of ready-made farm operations, it could not have done a better job. To begin with, despite the reserves of good company land in central and northern Alberta on which its colonization experience would have been of some use, it chose to locate the colony in the semi-arid zone of southwestern Saskatchewan. Why - and even how - it was able to do so is something of a mystery. It may be that the company wished to experiment with a dryland farming colony in the semi-arid zone, although the results of its earlier efforts to promote dryland farming would have offered little encouragement for such a course of action.[23] But even if this was the motive, the choice of the Coal Creek location could hardly have been less auspicious - being surpassed in this only by the layout of the colony and the choice of colonists to carry through the venture.

The site selected for the colony was Township 1-2 W3, south and east of Wood Mountain on the U.S. border (Map 17). How the CPR came to acquire this land, far from any other company holdings, is presently uncertain. Four townships (Tp. 1, Rges 2,3,5 and 6) in the area were alienated to the CPR by the Dominion in 1921.[24] This suggests that they were selected by the CPR in 1901, with the company receiving title 20 years later when the exemption clause expired.[25] Why they were taken up is not known, but the disposition of lands within 1-2 W3 is suggestive. In most areas where it took land the company received those odd-numbered sections within the township (i.e. 1,3,5, etc.) which were

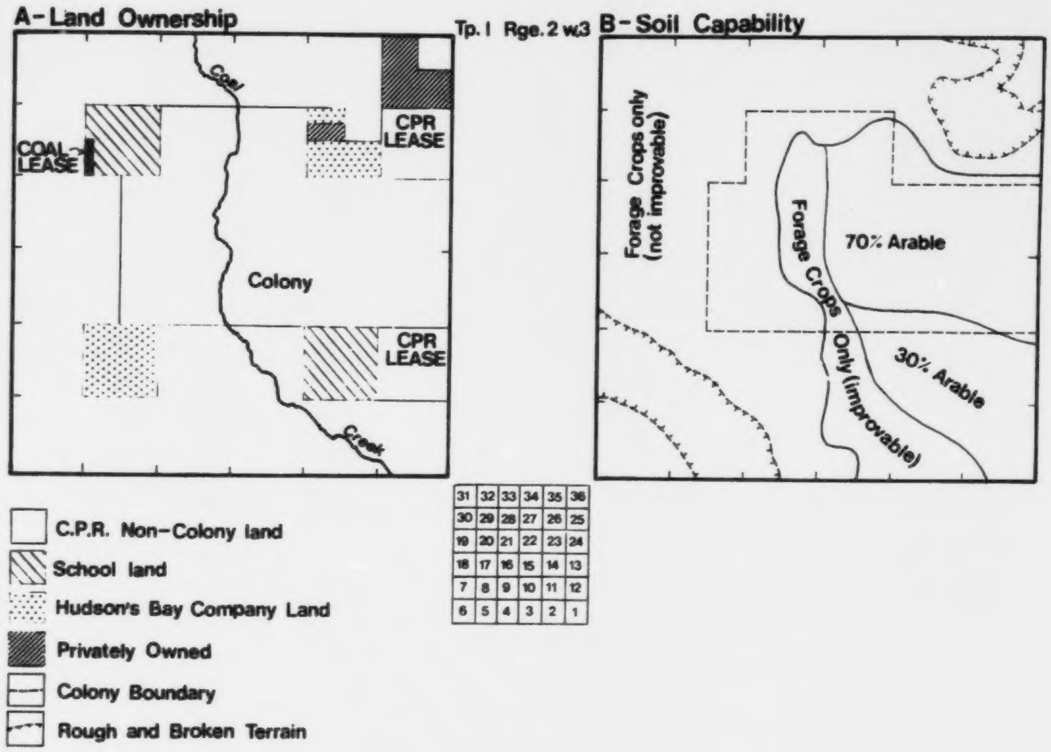

A-Land Ownership
Tp. I Rge. 2 w.3
B-Soil Capability
Coal
Creek
COAL LEASE
CPR LEASE
CPR LEASE
Colony
Forage Crops only (not improvable)
Forage Crops Only (improvable)
70% Arable
30% Arable
31 32 33 34 35 36
30 29 28 27 26 25
19 20 21 22 23 24
18 17 16 15 14 13
7 8 9 10 11 12
6 5 4 3 2 1
C.P.R. Non-Colony land
School land
Hudson's Bay Company Land
Privately Owned
Colony Boundary
Rough and Broken Terrain

FIG. 19 Township 1-2 W3: Land Ownership and Soil Capability, 1929

deemed "fairly fit for settlement" (i.e. saleable) by CPR assessors. The balance of an 'average' township would be taken up by Hudson's Bay Company lands (secs. 8 and 26), school lands (secs. 11 and 29) and Dominion homestead and sale lands (the even-numbered sections, less Hudson's Bay Company lands). In the irrigation blocks of Alberta, however, where it intended making heavy investments to promote intensive colonization, the CPR arranged a deal with the Dominion and the Hudson's Bay Company (1903) whereby it received all of the land in the township concerned.

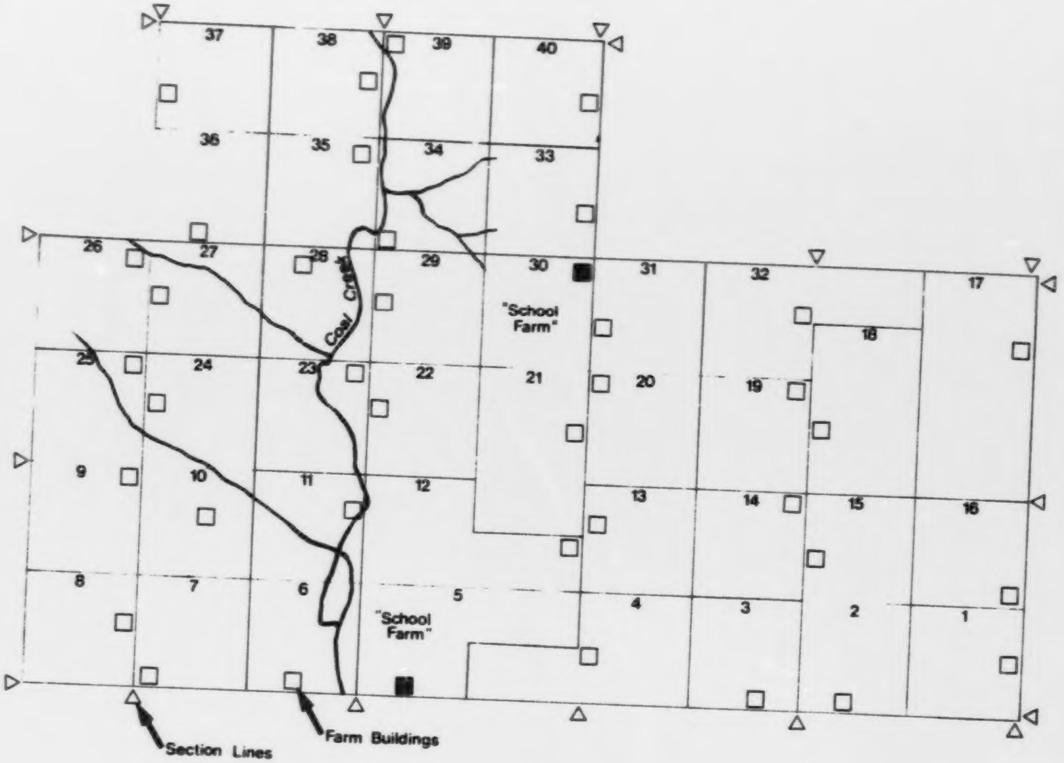
The disposition of lands in the Coal Creek township represents a stage somewhere between these two formats. In 1-2 W3 the company received all of the lands except Hudson's Bay Company and school allotments (secs. 8, 11, 26 less NE¼, and 29) and three other quarter-sections (W½ 20 and SW 36) which were omitted for unknown reasons.[26] It would appear that the Coal Creek township and its three companions were also transferred to the CPR under a special agreement; but one less comprehensive than that involved for the irrigation blocks. It may be that the lands were reserved in 1901 with some idea of later exploiting the coal beds known to be present in the area, without realizing that it was of a low quality and generally unsuited to large-scale removal. Then, when the townships were subdivided in 1909-10[27] (significantly, at the height of the ready-made farm program in Alberta), the company arranged to be granted all of the uncommitted land in the township for the purpose of later colonization. With the hiatus in the ready-made farm program in the period 1915-25 such plans would not have been followed through, yet after 1921 taxes had to be (and were[28]) paid on the land. Although the leasing of two sections (12 and 25) for grazing partially offset such expenses,[29] the tax situation would have provided an incentive to make some use of the land. Since the township was surveyed for colonization in 1927 - a year before the Two Hundred Farm agreement was signed - it is apparent that the CPR was looking for something to do with it.

If the above considerations are correct, the site of the colony was arrived at almost by default. It had little to recommend it from any other point of view. Township 1-2 W3 is located in the heart of an area noted for low precipitation, a high rate of evaporation, extremes of temperature and, last but not least, an abundance of grass but little other vegetation (Ch. 1). The rolling terrain, cut by the broad coulees of Coal Creek and its tributaries (all seasonally sporadic), offered little for the farmer. A modern agricultural capability survey rated more than 80 per cent of the township as being suitable only for grazing. Less than a quarter of this was considered amenable to improvements (such as reseeding to replace the natural grass cover with better forage species). The balance of the land in the township was rated as having severe limitations to agricultural use. Indeed, roughly 30 per cent of this (interspersed with the usable land) was considered useful only for forage crops. The rest of the area (about 3000 acres in total) was rated as suitable for agriculture, but with severe limitations to possible use due to the poor quality of the soil.[30] Although the colony, when finally laid out, took in almost all of the 'good' type of land in the township, this was not too much comfort. In one such section for example, the 1927 survey noted that the "land is very sandy, [and] even in a partially dry year would suffer."[31] The rolling topography and related erosion damage, in combinaton with the stony and underdeveloped soils of the area, made the colony somewhat less than a perfect one. The best that can be said for 1-2 W3 is that it was better than the other three company townships in the vicinity.

Aside from these intrinsic problems, the location of the colony had other undesirable features. In the first place, it was 15 miles from the nearest railway station (Rockglen), and over difficult terrain at that. While the situation was much improved when a line was built to Killdeer in the early 1930s, this did not offset the initial disadvantage. In the second place, the district was virtually uninhabited. A surveyor's report in 1910 noted no settlers at all were in the area.[32] After this date, small ranches began to appear, but these were few and far between.[33] When the CPR assessor examined the township in 1927 he reported only two residents. F.J. Gillan had purchased the south half of NW 26 from the Hudson's Bay Company in 1916 and resided there. Gillan had also been leasing section 25 from the CPR for some time, and had fenced it. Apparently he was a small-scale rancher. The only other inhabitant was one J. Cocklin, who operated a coal mine on leased school land in the west half of section 29. One other piece of land in use was section 12, leased from the CPR by A.J. Larson for 2¢ per acre per year. Larson, though, did not reside in the township.[34] The lack of experienced and acclimatized neighbours, able to teach new settlers by example, and provide them with seasonal work, militated against the success of the colony. For that matter, one would think that the fact that none of the area's current residents were attempting to farm would have been taken into consideration when the CPR was selecting the colony's location. Apparently this was not the case.

The Coal Creek township was not a pioneer's dream, by any means, but whatever small advantages it may have had were further reduced by the layout chosen for the colony. It has been noted that the CPR had found 160-acre farms to be the minimum feasible size even in irrigated areas. In its dryland farm colonies in Alberta the average size rose to between 160 and 320 acres or more. Most American dryland farmers in the Crop Payment scheme began with 320-acre farms. In the face of this experience, the company surveyor's recommendations,[35] and the government policy for homesteading in the region,[36] the CPR opted mainly for 160-acre farm units at Coal Creek. Specifically, of the 40 individual farms laid out in 1929, 33 were 160 acres, 6 were 240 acres, and only one was 320 acres in size.[37] Moreover, all seven of the larger units were on the limited area of 'good' soil, leaving half (17) of the 160-acre farms on lower quality land. Size, however, was not the only problem. The 40 farms were laid out in a tight block, totalling eleven sections in area. Most sections had three or four farms or parts of farms, and usually four (Map 20). Thus only 23 of the 40 bordered on non-colony land; of which half was CPR land. Should the settlers survive long enough and should they be able to retire or defer their heavy debts to the CPR and British Government, to reach a point where they needed and could afford more land, it would be hard to come by. In short, the layout of the colony made little provision for the future, unless it is assumed that the company anticipated a high rate of attrition among the settlers.

In addition to its location and layout, the choice of settlers for the colony must be questioned. The CPR was well aware that British immigrants did not necessarily make the best prairie farmers, at first,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"School Farm"
Coal Creek
18
25
24
23
22
21
20
19
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
"School Farm"
Section Lines
Farm Buildings

FIG. 20 Coal Creek Colony Farms, 1929

at least. As has been seen, this was specifically cited as one of the main reasons for the failure of the initial ready-made farm program. If the Britons' chances of success were low on irrigated farms and on better dryland farms in areas with more precipitation, what could be expected of them in the difficult environment of Coal Creek - even under optimum conditions, which the colony definitely did not offer? If the CPR considered it desirable to put settlers on this land, it would seem that experienced Canadian or American settlers would have been the obvious choice for colonists. The company already had considerable experience with the latter, under its Crop Payment program. But, of course, such settlers would not have been subsidized by the British Government.

Starting Up the Colony

With the signing of the master agreement in 1928 the problems of finding and setting up the farms required of the CPR became the responsibility of its Department of Natural Resources. As has already been noted, the company gave first priority to Coal Creek for their part of the 200 Farm Scheme. At about this time plans were finalized and, based on the 1927 survey at hand, 40 farms were laid out. Each of these was provided with a house, barn, well and necessary fencing. In the spring of 1929 the company also broke, disced and seeded a certain acreage on each farm. This varied in size with each farm and contract, apparently depending on what the developers, rather than the new owner, considered to be necessary. Very shortly after this work had been completed, the first 37 families began to arrive.[38] With one possible exception - Leonard Parfument of farm #38 - all of the new arrivals appear to have been of 'sturdy British stock'. While surnames are an unreliable indicator, most seem to have been English (e.g. Brewer, Peacock, Hay, Barr). The Irish, however, are also represented (Kennedy, Finnegan), as may be the Welsh (Jones, Griffin) and Scottish (Mathieson, Munro, Leslie). Their whereabouts before coming to Coal Creek have not been established although some certainly came from the "cottage" colonies - as, for example, E.W. Brewer of farm #6.[39] The settlers were overseen by a resident CPR supervisor-cum-accountant. The function of the two "School Farms" (5 and 30) is unclear. While they may have been used for instruction, they may have been so named for the fact that the houses on them were used as public schools.[40]

One of the new settlers was John Kennedy, an Irishman who took up farm #1. This farm is fairly representative; Kennedy was charged $13 an acre for his land, a total of $2080 for 160 acres. The average initial price for the colony as a whole was $14.35 an acre, or about $2300 for a 160-acre farm. This ranged from a low of $10 to a high of $20 an acre, with the majority being in the $13 - $16 range. It appears that, for farms larger than 160 acres, the additional land was offered at a slight discount.[41] The colony average price was slightly higher than that for CPR land sales as a whole in 1929, which was about $11.70 per acre.[42] On his land Kennedy found waiting a house and barn worth $909.15, an equipped well worth $167.73 and fencing worth $126.75. In addition, he was charged $63.10 for an unspecified amount of cultivation. The total for these improvements, provided by the CPR, came to $1266.73; slightly more than the basic $1200 provided for in the 200 farm agreement. The Overseas Settlement Committee provided Kennedy with an assortment of household goods and furniture, farm equipment and livestock; including a wagon, a comb plow and steel eveners, four horses and a cow. These were valued at $809.40; again, slightly over the amount allowed for. In addition to these properties and goods Kennedy received the $250 starting-up grant, the cost of which was split between the CPR ($200) and the British Government ($50).[43]

In theory, the company's investment should have been protected by a contract with the settler, and the British Government by a chattel mortgage. It appears, however that in the rush of peopling the colony, a few minor details were overlooked. Under Kennedy's entry in the Accounts Ledger appears the note, "No contract was prepared for this settler. Above represents charges as held against Kennedy at the time of his quitting." Kennedy vacated his Coal Creek farm on 2 October 1930 and returned to Ireland. What measures, if any, were taken against him to recover the debt are not mentioned.

Farm #1 did not lie vacant for long. On 1 April 1931 one Frank Williams took up residence. Williams was charged the same basic price for the land ($13 an acre), but was given a $167 reduction on the house, barn and well. More fencing had been erected, however, and $216.75 was charged against his account for this work. Williams also received $540.39 worth of goods and equipment from the British Government. These (apparently) included Kennedy's farm equipment, given at a discount. The four horses, and the cow (with its "CPR issue" heifer calf), may also have been the previous owner's, judging by the reduced prices. The only difference in the two equipages seems to have been that Williams received a new set of Massey-Harris N. 8 16 x 16 Disc Harrows (for $66.70). Williams was given the standard initial grant of $250, and received subsistence grants later on. The cost of these was split evenly between the CPR and the British Government; and, like the other items was covered by a contract and chattel mortgage. But, despite all of this assistance, Williams fared no better than Kennedy. In fact, he lasted exactly as long - 18 months - and vacated on Sept. 22, 1932. No further residents could be found for farm #1, and the CPR and British Government were left with 160 unoccupied acres containing some $1200 worth of improvements, and $800 worth of livestock and used equipment, respectively.

As the story of this farm - a typical one - suggests, the Coal Creek colony did not get off to a good start. The colonizing agencies had apparently expected such problems, having raised the maximum assistance level to $7000 per family in March of 1929.[44] It is probably fair to say though, that the problems were more serious than had been anticipated. While the evidence is incomplete in some respects, the colony's general course of development is quite clear.

The Decline and Fall of the Coal Creek Colony, 1929-38

The settlers at Coal Creek were denied the satisfaction of even one year of success to get them started. The first year's crop in the colony was, by and large, a failure. As early as November of 1929 the CPR and British Government entered into negotiations to provide further assistance. The resulting "Supplementary Agreement" of Dec. 12, 1929[45] provided for a maximum subsistence and livestock advance of $250 per family, a seed advance of $100, and an implement advance of $100; all for 1930. These revisions were approved early in 1930, the cost being divided evenly between the CPR and British Government.[46] With this $450 (maximum) to support them, it appears that the 37 families at Coal Creek were willing to keep trying. In any case, no abandonments are recorded for 1929.

The first year of operations set the pattern for what followed. In 1930 a crop of sorts was brought in, but it did not provide the boost needed. A CPR official noted in the winter of 1930-31 that

> The price of grain as affecting those families having a small area in crop during the past season, and the lack of sufficient employment during the harvest season for those families who were developing their farms, has brought about a condition requiring further assistance.[47]

An extension of the 1930 Supplementary Agreement was approved on 11 April 1931.[48] This new assistance, however, came too late for the nine or ten families who abandoned their farms in 1930 - probably after the disappointing harvest as in Kennedy's case, or early in 1931 as for H. Watson of farm #27. Ten new settlers were brought in to replace them in the early spring of 1931, including Brewer on farm #6, Williams on #1 and C.H. Bugg on #27. The settlers who stayed on received a maximum of $450 assistance for "maintenance and subsistence," seed and feed, and equipment. The ten new families did not receive the $100 equipment advance, theirs supposedly being adequate to see them through. Despite this new assistance, at least three more farms were abandoned in 1931, including those of two neighbours (H. Wickens on #24 and J.J. Fisher on #26) who left in the same day in July and one close by whose owner vacated in November (C.T. Gillard on #9).

Conditions in the colony rapidly deteriorated in 1931 and 1932. In March of 1932 the CPR's Department of Immigration and Colonization in Winnipeg reported that

> We have been able to arrange that all families in the Coal Creek Colony receive subsistence through the Saskatchewan Relief Commission. These families are, however, penniless and, as sum [sic] essentials are not provided by the Relief Commission, it is estimated that a total of $1000.00 additional subsistence will be required during the current year.[49]

Assistance from the Saskatchewan Relief Commission covered seed and feed only, leaving the CPR and British Government to cover subsistence and equipment by a renewal of the 1931 Supplementary Agreement. It was also considered necessary to provide a $100 equipment advance, as needed, to the families who had settled in 1931.[50] Nor was this enough for the year. At the Department of Natural Resources Advisory Committee meeting of 19 September 1932, it was noted that "due to the poor crops in the Coal Creek Colony, the settlers would probably need further assistance during the coming winter" - $500 for the colony being suggested.[51] At least two settlers - Williams of farm #1 and Griffin of #3 - had no interest in the matter, having left in September. Another settler, A. Thomson of farm #15, was transfered to farm #3 to replace Griffin.

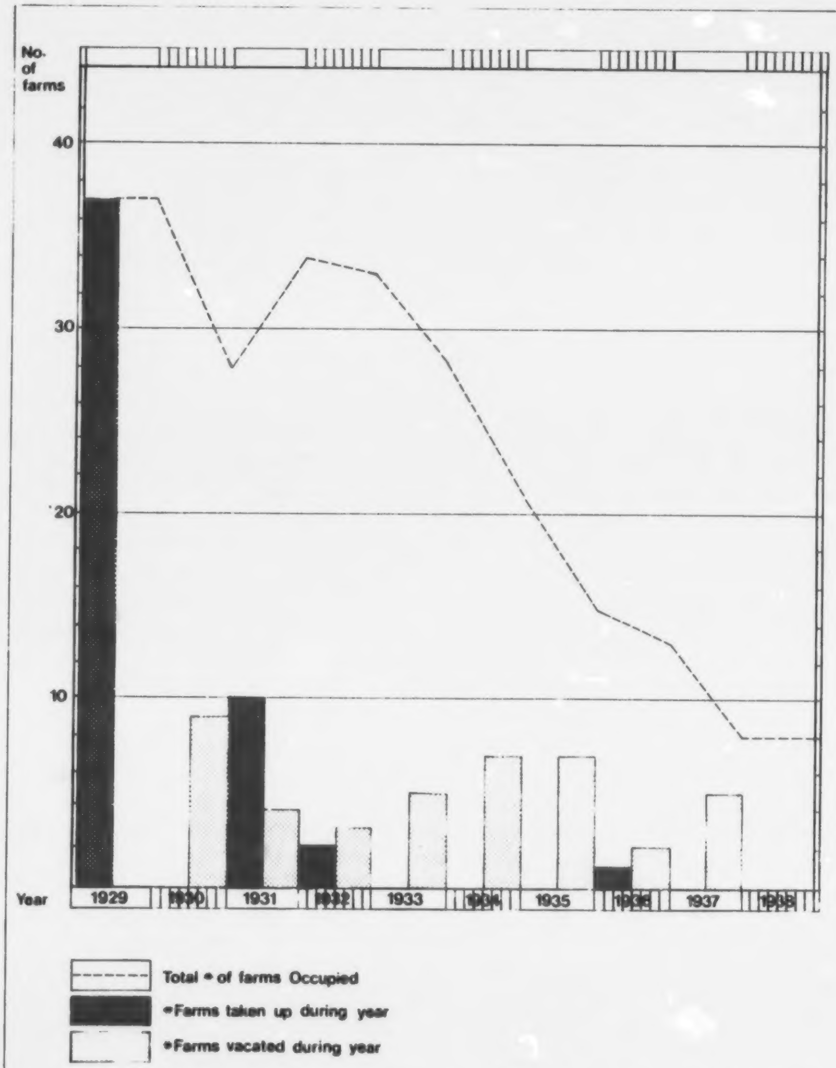

FIG. 21 Farm Occupation at Coal Creek, 1929-1938

At the end of 1932 the colony was obviously in some difficulty. But the worst was yet to come. In 1932 the majority of the farms were at least occupied. The relatively modest turnover since 1929 (about 20%) had been steadily compensated for by new arrivals. In 1933 the second phase of the colony's 'development' began: one marked by a high rate of attrition which was not offset by replacements.

The problems of 1932 were compounded by the effects of the severe winter of 1932-33. In April of 1933 it was reported to the Advisory Committee that

> the situation in the Coal Creek Colony was very acute, some of the horses and cattle of the settlers having perished during the winter, and that a great many of the settlers were on Government relief.[52]

The CPR came to the settlers' assistance; but, although stock feed advances were made, this was done grudgingly. It was noted that "the Company had endeavoured to refrain from making any further advances to these settlers." In any case, the assistance proved to be inadequate, for two months later it was reported that

> while spring conditions had been most favourable, dry weather and grasshoppers had changed the situation during the early part of June, and the colonists were again facing a crop failure.[53]

While it is apparent that the CPR's enthusiasm for the colony was on the decline, it nonetheless acted - after the potential crop failure became one in fact - to assist the settlers. As an interim step $1000 was tendered to the Saskatchewan Relief Committee to guarantee relief payments for the settlers for a full year, until the fall of 1934.[54] More drastic measures, however, were needed.

At the August 28 meeting of the Advisory Committee it was decided that S. G. Porter and J.N.K. Macalister would be sent to Coal Creek

> to interview the settlers, and to make whatever concessions they might deem necessary in the way of reducing their land contracts, moving them to new locations, or otherwise.

The specific reason for sending the delegation at this time seems to have been the fact that "a number of families had left the colony, refusing to return."[55] despite the relief guarantee. The threat to its investment brought a glimpse of the 'iron hand' in the 'velvet glove' of CPR assistance to the colonists. In the resolution despatching the delegation, it was stated "that those of the settlers who refused to return to the colony should be left to the Provincial or Dominion Government to be deported or dealt with in any other way which the government see fit to adopt."[56] At this point the settlers were faced with a difficult choice between the unknown wrath of the government and the apparent stagnation of the colony. Many seem to have preferred the first alternative.

The report on Coal Creek made by Porter and Macalister in November of 1933 was both far-reaching and limited. They recommended substantial capital discounts on the price charged for land (33%) and improvements (25%). They also advised that all interest (6% p.a.) on capital accrued to October of 1933 simply be written off. The report suggested that the British Government be asked to take similar steps with regard to the chattels which it had supplied. If the British Government agreed, it was further suggested that all interest on advances be written off as well, and the settlers' installment payments on 'subsistence and maintenance' advances be deferred, "until the Colony has reached the point that no further advances are required." Since the settlers' equipment was in poor condition, Porter and Macalister advised that that left by vacating settlers be sold at cost to the remaining ones, with any extra being stored until needed and then sold on the same terms. Finally, they recommended that vacated farms should be leased for share-cropping to these settlers.[57]

All of these measures were approved by the Advisory Committee and, later, by the British Government. By and large, they were good ones. They constituted an admission that the initial capital debt placed on colonists had been too great, relative to their resources and potential production, and recognized the fact that the capital to meet payments and provide the means to continue farming was in extremely short supply. At the same time, however, the recommendations did little to solve the immediate problems of the settlers. These problems were not with debt, as such, since for the majority there was little possibility of meeting even interest payments. In fact, there was little likelihood of settlers being dispossessed when the CPR and the British government had a substantial investment in them and no means of recouping it other than leaving the settlers on the farm and hoping for the best. Rather, the problems were drought, grasshoppers and the apparent absence of any future at Coal Creek for the majority. Many wanted to leave, but needed assistance to do so. Some doubtless wished to stay, but needed more land for the future and the means of immediate survival. The report gave only slight assurance to the latter, and ensuing activities concentrated on the former.

By the start of 1934 there were about 28 families still on their farms. By the end of 1935, 15 or less remained.[58] This decline was the product of two consecutive years of drought and grasshopper infestation, which led to an exodus of colonists, assisted, in part, by the colonizing agencies. On 1 January 1934 a "Fourth Supplementary Agreement" on the Coal Creek Colony was drawn up between the British Government and the CPR. This provided for both "assistance to certain families settled in the area known as the Coal Creek Colony ... and for the removal of families in the Colony to farms elsewhere,"[59] For some reason, however, this does not appear to have been acted upon immediately. It may be that, despite the 1933 report, the administrators did not fully appreciate the gravity of the situation. If this was the case, they were soon shorn of their illusions. As early as May of 1934 it became obvious that the settlers would not be able to meet any of their payments, and the $1000 provided in the previous year was being referred to as simply "non-recoverable."[60] By June the crop outlook was reported as "very discouraging" and the Advisory Committee began to receive requests from the colonists for assistance in moving to new farms in northern Saskatchewan. One settler wrote the committee that he "felt that conditions in the Rockglen district did not warrant his remaining in the colony."[61]

The committee, still unconvinced, called on one of its Saskatchewan representatives to make a report on the whole situation at Coal Creek. W.J. Gerow confirmed the severity of the colonists' problems, and made several recommendations. The first was that all interest payments for 1934 should be written off the books, since the company could not expect to be paid them anyway. This, however, was not the crux of the problem.

Gerow further suggested, specifically, that about half ("7 or 10") of the remaining families should be moved to CPR improved farms in northern Saskatchewan together with all their goods and with a guarantee of a year's relief. This, he proposed, should be done before winter. On the other hand, some families wished to remain, and should be encouraged to do so; but these "fourteen continuing families" should be promised that, if the 1935 crop failed, they would be allowed to do the same as the first category of colonists, with the same guarantee. As a final point, Gerow advised that the Company's $500 grant for the maintenance of schools in the colony be continued.[62]

This program was soon put into effect. In 1934 about seven families left or were removed from the colony. In the next year, when no signs of improvement whatsoever appeared, another seven departed. This reduced the size of the colony by half, bringing it down close to the figure suggested by Gerow the previous year. The fact that even this many colonists remained must be considered a tribute to their fortitude. Early in January of 1936 it was reported that the families remaining in the colony "have no funds to meet medical requirements or repairs and replacement of equipment and very little prospect of Government relief meeting these requirements."[63] Emergency funds were supplied by the CPR. Conditions, however, went from bad to worse that year. Surprisingly, few settlers left at once - and one farm was even reoccupied,[64] but the monotonous litany of decline continued unabated. The crop of 1936 was an utter failure in the colony; "not even gardens or feed for cattle [were harvested] this year" one official reported. Even before the failure was officially confirmed, settlers began to request to be moved elsewhere.[65] In 1936 the 1934 Supplementary Agreement was extended and amended and, as of February of 1937, the deadline for moving assistance was extended to 30 September 1937. At this stage the agreement covered $60 advance per family plus $200 for moving costs "from the Coal Creek Colony to other parts of the Province."[66] This marked the beginning of the last phase of the colony: simple abandonment. The combination of one total crop failure too many, and the availability of a way out, gave the final blow to the operation. While only two settlers seem to have left in 1936, five more moved on in 1937. By the end of 1937 just eight families remained on the land. After nine years of settlement, therefore, only 16 per cent of the families who had tried to start a farm at Coal Creek still had one.

In 1938 the CPR sent in another appraiser to list and evaluate the land and improvements at Coal Creek.[67] He found the bare skeleton of a colony. His section-by-section appraisal, updating the 1927 survey, largely consisted of a monotonous repetition of the same phrase: "There are now 4 abandoned sets of buildings" - or three or, rarely only two. Only eight farms (Nos. 2, 3, 10, 23, 24, 33, 37, and 40) were still occupied. Significantly, four of these were located on the better portions of the limited area of 'good' soil, and the remainder in the valley of Coal Creek itself, where water was occasionally available. It does not appear that many of the survivors were doing well at the time of the survey. Farm 33 was reported as having 140 acres cultivated, but 120 acres of this were covered with weeds.[68] The surveyor noted, however, that the farmers on 3 and 4 "appear to be getting along." The area's general lack of promise was confirmed by his recommendation that land prices in the township be reduced by 65 per cent. His advice was followed. In many ways the story of the Coal Creek colony can be summarized from one dry comment found on many of the section appraisals. In 1927 the examiner had noted that rainfall in the area was "Usually sufficient, 2 dry years in the past 15." In 1938 his colleague added, "Insufficient past 10 years." After 1938 the colony was reduced to a local concentration of individual CPR contracts.

Conclusions

The CPR colony at Coal Creek cannot be counted among the company's many successes. On the contrary, it bore stronger resemblance to a disaster. The substantial investment lost by the company and the British Government was the least of its costs. The official records barly hint at the burden born by the settlers themselves. Why did the colony fail? The colonists had many advantages; the thorough preparation and full equipment of the farms, the continuing support of the two sponsors, and a resident supervisor and subsidized schools. The fact that even eight settlers made it to 1938 is probably a fair indication that they had an advantage (relative as it may have been) over the less fortunate majority of independent farmers in the west. Nonetheless, an 85 per cent failure rate is rather high in absolute terms.

The obvious answer is to put the blame for the failure entirely on the drought and depression of the 1930s. It could well be argued that the CPR cannot be held responsible for what amounted to an act of God. To do so, however, is to evade the main question. What should be asked is not 'why did it fail', but, rather, 'why was it started'? To be more specific, why was this type of colony started in this area? In effect, the CPR transplanted a colony designed specifically for and tested in the irrigated and dry sub-humid lands of Alberta into one of the least hospitable pieces of farm real estate on the prairies. It did so without making any discernible attempt to adapt the colony's arrangements to these conditions. Moreover it placed colonists whose limitations for such a task were widely recognized, who, without any doubt, would have had difficulty adapting under the best of conditions. Their problems were compounded by the fact that there was no one in the area from whom they could learn by example. The most probable reason that no such 'teachers' were around was that farmers with any experience whatsoever declined to attempt the impossible. The fact that the colony location is adjacent to the part of the site of the proposed Grasslands National Park is significant. The grasslands in the Park area have survived in a relatively unaltered state because they are good for little, other than a limited amount of grazing. The same can be said for much of the colony township.

In short, the failure of Coal Creek arose from either a failure of imagination on the part of the CPR or, conversely, too much of it. Either the factors involved were not carefully considered in the face of an urgent requirement for more farms, or potential problems were dismissed far too lightly, and optimistically. This effort at colonization bears all the hallmarks of a classic bureaucratic bungle, and none of mature consideration such as might have been expected from an organization with 50 years of experience in western development. It might be said that the CPR's last colonization program ended not with a bang, but with a misfire.

The story of the colony is, of course, a footnote to that of the 'Dirty Thirties' as a whole. It is possible that a new colony of any kind in this area would have suffered severely during the period. This, however, is speculation. The plain fact is that the colony was in trouble from the beginning due to faulty planning. Under any other circumstances its problems would have led to some very embarrassing publicity and criticism. Instead, it was largely ignored at the time and has been forgotten since. The Coal Creek colony deserves better, if only as a classic example of how not to undertake settlement in the semi-arid lands of the southwestern prairies.

Notes on Sources

Virtually the only source of information about the Coal Creek Colony is the CPR records at the Glenbow-Alberta Institute Archives in Calgary. There is no reference to it in local histories or in other literature dealing with the area, except for one brief (and inaccurate) aside in a recent economic study. The latter - J.W. Channon et al., Prairie Regional Studies in Economic Geography No. 3: Rockglen Region, Saskatchewan (Ottawa: 1969), p. 49, Appendix 2 "Historical Background" - simply refers to a 'CPR colony' in Tp. 1-2 W3. This reference led the author to Calgary, but did not help a great deal in locating the relevant materials. The first problem was simply to discover the official name of the colony; whereupon it was found that references to Coal Creek in the CPR records were not separately indexed. A significant portion of the limited time available was then spent in digging through indexes and general files to find them. It is therefore quite probable that more information would come to light with more research. That dealing with land acquisition and policy decisions relating to the colony, and with the colonists themselves would be of particular interest. The files of the Colonists Service Association and the Canada Colonization Association certainly deserve a closer examination. Other useful information might also be uncovered through a search of federal records dealing with land transfers, and provincial relief documents, and by contacting local residents.

APPENDIX B. HISTORIC SITES AND FEATURES IN THE PARK

As is noted at the beginning of this study, little activity of historic interest has taken place within the confines of the park itself; and none that can be dealt with without reference to the development of the wider "Park area." Given the small size of the designated park, and the fact that more than half of it is badland terrain, this is understandable. The following list presents possible sites and features of historic interest in descending order of estimated importance and probability. The ratings are necessarily quite arbitrary. It should be noted that many of the sites must be found (if possible) before their actual value can be ascertained. The accompanying table provides a summary of sites with their locations, and cross-references to the text.

Sites

Seventy Mile Ranch: 27-2-12 W3 (ranch buildings).

This was the "76" Ranch's Sand Lake Field lease from about 1914 to 1920, when it became T.B. Long's Seventy Mile Ranch. The lease was terminated in 1926, opening the area to homesteaders. The ranch itself took in most or all of Core A, and the ranch buildings are located just next to it. A ranch is still operating on the site, but the age of the present buildings is not known. They mark the former location of Cree Crossing on the Whitewater Trail to Montana. Other possible ranching-related sites in the park area include the Turkey Track line camp established where the Frenchman crosses the border (Core B) in 1902, which operated until about 1907, and any of a number of small ranches established on the lower Frenchman in 1907-14 (Cores A and B). Specific locations for any of the latter are not available, but the ranches might be located using land records. (Ch. 6 and Maps 10 and 11)

Dawson Dinosaur Find: Probably within the northern part of Core C.

In 1875 G.M. Dawson of the Boundary Commission discovered the first dinosaur fossils in Canada in the Rock Creek badlands, 20 miles southwest of Wood Mountain settlement on the Hinsdale Trail. It might be possible to pinpoint the location with Dawson's original diary, now in the possession of McGill University (A.R. Turner, "Surveying the International Boundary: The Journal of George M. Dawson, 1873" Saskatchewan History 21#1 Winter, 1968, pp. 1-23). Dawson's Report is not very specific. (Ch. 5 and Map 2)

Boundary Commission

Core C. contains part of the original Boundary Commission Trail - the section from Wood Mountain to the U.S. (via Ft. N.J. Turnay) later known as the Hinsdale Trail (Dawson's map in his Report shows it bending back up north to the east of the Frenchman). Also, Rock Creek was the starting-point for survey work in the summer of 1874. In addition it should be possible to locate original border-marker monument positions along the southern edges of both Core C and Core B, using the highly detailed border maps in Campbell and Twining's Report. Parson's West on the 49th Parallel has a useful guide to boundary commission reports and publications, with their locations. (Ch. 5 and Maps 8 and 9)

Métis Villages: Frenchman River Valley, possibly in Core A and/or Core B.

Metis hunters are known to have wintered on the lower Frenchman in substantial numbers in the 1860s and 1870s. Although the main village was probably at Seventy Mile Crossing, the archaeological survey might well run across one of these sites in the park, especially if they are looking for it. The names of the two creeks running into the Frenchman just beside Core B ('Breed' and 'Little Breed') are suggestive. The Sioux also wintered somewhere on the lower Frenchman in 1879-80, and Sitting Bull crossed the line here in 1877. (Chs. 2 and 4, and Maps 7 and 8)

Trails: All three Core Areas.

The only major early trail crossing a part of the park was that running from Wood Mountain settlement southwest to the border. This was probably a Métis trail, was part of the Boundary Commission Trail, was used for North West Mounted Police daily and weekly patrols, and was in general use by ranchers and farmers until the 1920s. It has connections with a number of the other sites in Core C, and should be fairly easy to locate. At a later date, trails appeared through Cores A and B, running to and from Cree and Breed Crossings. (Append. C and Maps 7, 8 & 9)

North West Mounted Police Outposts: Core C (6-1-6 W3) and Core B (3 or 4-1-10 W3).

A police summer outpost was located on the Hinsdale Trail in 1893 (at least) to anchor the new patrol network established that year along the border. This patrol route also crossed Core B, where a summer outpost was located in 1906 (according to the Stations and Patrols map for that year; there is no mention of it in the annual report). Since tents were probably used, there is not likely to be a definite "site" associated with either of these. More precise locations might be found by searching patrol records in the RCMP files at the Public Archives in Ottawa (see Note on Sources, Ch. 3). (Ch. 3, Maps 9 and 12)

Homesteads: possibly Core A.

When the Seventy Mile Ranch lease was cancelled in 1926, much of the land was reportedly taken up by homesteading farmers. Some or all may have been abandoned in the 1930s. In order to confirm this, and locate such sites, a thorough search of land records will be required. This will be necessary in any case to locate small ranches. (Chs. 6 and 8, and "A", above)

Seventy Mile Crossing: (Note: not in the park); 31, 32 and 33-3-13 W3 and 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9-4-13 W3 (approx.), around the present site of Val Marie.

This crossing is a wide accessible section of the Frenchman River Valley created by a glacial meltwater channel cutting across a preglacial valley. It has long been the focal point of activity in the southwestern corner of the park area, and is very close to Core A of the Park itself. The name derives from its position on the old Ft. Walsh trail, relative to Eastend. It is marked by a prominent butte (14-3-13 W3; adjacent to Core A). There are prehistoric sites in the vicinity (Ch. 2) and it has at different times been the site of Métis communities (Ch. 2), a Boundary Commission depot (Ch. 5), Sioux camps (Ch. 4), North West Mounted Police outposts (Ch. 3; Snake Creek), a Turkey Track line camp (Ch. 6), a number of smaller ranches (Ch. 6), and a major Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act irrigation project (Chs. 6 and 12). An early farming community appeared there about 1910, and it is presently the location of Val Marie, which is the terminus of one of the last CPR lines built into the park area. The old cart trail which defined the crossing until the 1920s was used by all of the above groups, and the crossing was an intersection for a number of other trails (Append. C). With a little imagination, Core A could be called part of the crossing area.

#	Name of Site	Core	Chapters	Located?*
A1	Seventy Mile Ranch	A	6	yes
A2	Small ranches	A,B	6	no
A3	Turkey Track line camp	B	6	no
B	Dawson Dinosaur Find	C	5	no
C1	I.B.C. Trail	C	5	yes
C2	I.B.C. Summer Survey 1874	C	5	yes
C3	I.B.C. Border Monuments	B,C	5	yes
D1	Métis Villages	A,B	2	no
D2	Sioux Camp	A,B	4	no
D3	Sitting Bull Entry	B	4	yes
E1	Hinsdale Trail	C	2-6	yes
E2	Later Trails	A,B	6	yes
F1	NWMP Outpost 1893	C	3	no
F2	NWMP Outpost 1906	B	3	no
G	Homesteads	A	7	no
H	Seventy Mile Crossing	nr. A	2	yes

*"Located" or readily locatable. (see list)

APPENDIX C. TRAILS

One important feature of the park area was its network of trails, some of which (due to the tardy construction of railways) were in use as late as the 1920s. The history of their use is closely entwined with that of the development of the area as a whole, and has been referred to where relevant in the course of this study. The subject of trails, however, has some features of intrinsic interest, particularly in regard to their creation and disappearance. A summary is therefore in order.

This discussion must begin with a qualification. As anyone who has attempted to reconstruct their routes knows, prairie trails were anything but permanent. This particularly applied to subsidiary trails. William Pearce noted, after describing the main routes of western cart trails, that "In addition, of course, there were trails more or less used running in all directions. Where the country was open those with experience could readily make a route from any one point to another fairly straight."[1] When the need of the moment disappeared, so did the new branch. The "trunk" trails were longer-lasting, but only in terms of their general route. In between key fords or similarly determinant terrain features, the precise course followed could vary considerably at different times. New travellers might seek a straighter route, or one adapting to the current availability of water and grass. Also, as the prairie sod was worn away, the path would gradually change to keep on firmer ground.[2] Add to this changing trade patterns and the appearance of new (and often temporary) settlements, and the problems of location are readily apparent. They are compounded by the nature of the sources available.[3] It might be expected, for example, that surveyors' diagrams would be entirely reliable. They certainly are more so than the freehand efforts of many others, but it must be remembered that the surveyors' reference points for trails were the lines of survey. That is, only the point of intersection could be accurately pinpointed, and the intervening path would have to be roughed in. When the mapping was done as part of a subdivision survey, this meant using reference points every quarter-mile; but in a block outline survey they could be up to six miles apart. In other words, the best that can be hoped for in most cases is to locate the trail route within a mile or two.

It is very difficult to say when the first definite trails (in the sense of tracks used more-or-less consistently by people) appeared in the park area, but it probably was when the Métis began to move in the 1860s. The idea that a regular trail network, made and used by buffalo and Indians, was in existence earlier in the West has been challenged by several historians, notably F.G. Roe. In the case of the buffalo, it would appear that the "trails" ascribed to them mainly consisted of well-marked crossing points on rivers. These were "gratuitously seized upon as evidence, not merely of paths to the water, which they are, but of unbroken, through ... routes," which they probably were not.[4]

And in the case of the Indians, one historian has noted that native hunting groups were "too small numerically, too self-contained, and in most cases too migratory to demand or require specially-built highways for communications or transport": and therefore the only definite trails resulting from their travels were those "past rapids and canyons, or through...plain, or upland from one valley or lake to another."[5] In short, both Indian and buffalo "trails" were of limited importance. It is likely that in the park area, before the arrival of the Métis, the only existing trails were short segments at convenient crossings of the Frenchman, and in the more difficult portions of the badlands. And these, along with any which might temporarily have appeared elsewhere, would constantly have been subjected to the obliterating effects of the harsh climate.[6]

The Métis first journeyed in force to the Wood Mountain country in the 1850s, and by 1870 were wintering in the area in fairly large numbers. Within a very few years their cart brigades, carrying supplies in and meat and robes out, and hunting parties to and from the herds, had beaten out a well-defined network of trails. The earliest were probably those noted by John Macoun. Writing about the early 1870s, he described two trails running west from Fort Ellice. One "led to the southwest, by Moose Mountain to Wood Mountain, and was known as the "Traders Road" in 1874, according to Dawson and French. The other main route went west from Ellice to Ft. Qu'Appelle "and passed westward to Moose Jaw Creek and from thence to the Cypress Hills." This trail, which crossed the Dirt Hills and ran south of Old Wives Lake, was the "Plain Hunters Trail" taken by the North West Mounted Police in 1874, and a branch ran south from the Lake to Wood Mountain.[7] (Map 7)

These two trails converged on and passed through the small settlement at Wood Mountain. The "Traders Road" went on as the main trail west from the settlement. According to Dawson, it "passes for some distance along the northern edge of the water-shed plateau, and then going over it where it [the plateau] turns north-westward [Pinto Butte], crosses the valley of the White Mud River, sixteen miles north of the forty-ninth parallel, and twenty three miles north west" of the point where the river crossed the border.[8] Crossing the Frenchman at Seventy Mile Crossing, this trail continued westwards to the Cypress Hills and Ft. Benton.[9] Part of it later became the main police patrol trail to Ft. Walsh, and was in use well into the 20th century. The "Plain Hunters Trail" branch from Old Wives Lake continued on through Wood Mountain to the southwest and was "used by the half-breeds of that place in going to Fort N.J. Turnay--a trading post south of the Line" at the intersection of the Frenchman and Rock Creek.[10] (Map 7)

The Métis had established trails leading out from Wood Mountain in the four cardinal directions. Another east-west trail was added by the Boundary Commission in 1873-74. Coming west from Manitoba, the main Boundary Commission trail dipped south of the border just past the Souris River, but a branch split off north to connect with the Trader's Road to Wood Mountain. At the latter point, the United States and Canadian branches rejoined, and then followed the aforementioned Turnay trail back into the United States. After crossing the Frenchman near this post, the Boundary Commission trail then followed it upstream along the west bank and, in Canada, ran due west along the border.[11] It also appears that the Boundary Commission trails in the area remained in use after 1874, that to Turnay becoming the route to Hinsdale, Montana. (Maps 7 and 8)

By the mid-1870s the Wood Mountain settlement was a major crossroad for the region. Its importance was confirmed, and institutionalized, by the establishment of police posts there in 1874-75 and (permanently) after 1877, to command the trails. In 1877 the Police themselves used the Wood Mountain-Cypress Hills trail as their line of communications and supply to Ft. Walsh, and established the first of many outposts along it (the favourite location being Pinto Butte). Over the next decade many new trails also appeared. When the main Métis community moved to Willow Bunch in 1880-82 several trails connecting the old with the new settlements were established. Also, since the Wood Mountain post was the main custom's port-of-entry for this stretch of the border, a trail south to Glasgow, Montana, appeared.[12] The main change, however, came in the mid-1880s. When Moose Jaw was founded on the new CPR line, most of the northern trails slightly altered course to converge on it. After 1885 the old branch of the Plain Hunters Trail from Old Wives Lake became the police line of supply to Moose Jaw:[13] but this "Old Trail" soon had a rival. The telegraph line constructed in 1885 followed a straighter route to Moose Jaw, and soon had a trail paralleling it. This Old Pole Trail remained in use for more than 30 years, and eventually provided one of the main lines of access for homesteaders after the turn of the century.[14] Throughout the period 1874-1912 the old and new trails alike were regularly patrolled by the North West Mounted Police detachment at Wood Mountain.[15] (Maps 8 and 9)

The last series of alterations to the trail network took place in the period 1900-20, in the western section of the park area. When substantial numbers of ranchers moved into the Frenchman River district after 1907, routes to the main CPR line in the north, and to the south, were quickly "worn in." The two older north-south routes through the Seventy Mile and Fifty-Mile crossings to Swift Current (Map 8) were used at first, in a slightly altered form. Then, with the construction of the southern CPR line from Assiniboia to Shaunavon their routes were again altered to pass through the new towns of Cadillac and Ponteix, and new trails also appeared.[16] These routes were heavily used by ranchers and, later, homesteaders, and remained in use until the construction of the CPR line to Val Marie in the mid-1920s (Map 12). During this same period, as railway lines to Rockglen, Mankota and Killdeer appeared (Map 16), the usefulness of the eastern trail network also came to an end.

By the late 1920s most of the wagon trails in the park area had been replaced by the railways, for heavy cargo, and by municipal and provincial roads for local use. Since the old Wood Mountain settlement - the key to the old trail network - was bypassed by the railway, the present communications routes in the park area bear little resemblance to the old. For the most part, the historic trails have disappeared. One exception, however, is worth noting. In 1965 the Wood Mountain Historic Park (provincial), with its reconstructed police post, was opened. To complement this, as a centennial project, "The task of locating and marking the North West Mounted Police Trail from Wood Mountain to Fort Walsh was completed by the Saskatchewan History and Folklore Society." For the whole of the 200-odd mile route "White concrete pillars, bearing black marker plates, stand as sentinels to guard the trail in memory of those who once patrolled it so faithfully."[17] This project has provided a fitting memorial to the many trails which played a major role in the development of the park area.

APPENDIX D. LAND RECORDS

A detailed study of the disposition and disposal of lands in the park will probably be necessary at some stage in subsequent park historical research. This can provide a complete list of people who have lived in and/or owned land in the core areas in the past 70 or so years, with the location of their holdings. A quantitative analysis might also be interesting. Collecting the data, however, will not be an easy job. The land included in the three cores totals 104.5 square miles, made up of 418 quarter-sections (A-104, B-130, C-184). Any given quarter-section may have changed hands a number of times. To compile a complete record of these transactions (the only kind which would be of any use) it will be necessary to search the records in several different repositories. The following list gives the main types of records and their location. For survey records see Chapters 5 and 7 and, for homesteading in general, Chapters 7 and 8.

A. Homestead Records: (Dominion Land Records); Archives of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon; holdings include Homestead Files (arranged by land location), Patent Diagrams, Original Homestead Ledgers (entries by township), and Moose Jaw Dominion Land Agency Files. An alphabetical card file of homesteaders, cross-indexed with the homestead files, is also available. These records cover ordinary homesteads, preemptions and purchased homesteads. See L. Rodwell, "Saskatchewan Homestead Records" Saskatchewan History 18 #1 (Winter 1965), pp. 10-29 for a description of the records and their contents.

B. School Land Records: A.O.S.S.: holdings arranged by sale number, and given name of purchaser only. Sections 11 and 29 in each township were normally school land - about 25 quarters in the park.

C. Hudson's Bay Company Sale Records: Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg. Section 8 and all or part of 26 in each township was automatically assigned as Hudson's Bay Company land, a total of 16 quarters in the park.

D. Dominion Grazing Leases: Public Archives of Canada (Dept. of Interior, Dominion Lands Branch, Timber and Grazing Lands Branch records 1874-1947, Vols. 1180-1295, RG 15C2a); see Ch. 6.

E. CPR Land Records: Glenbow-Alberta Institute Archives, Calgary (C.P.R. Dept. of Natural Resources records); may apply to Tps. 1-5 and 1-6 W3. See Appendix A regarding the anomalous CPR disposition in four border townships in the park area.

F. Land Titles: Moose Jaw Land Registration District; ownership records from original patent to date, arranged by land location.

APPENDIX E. PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographic materials relevant to the human history of the park area are in short supply. Scenic shots, regardless of their date, tend to be rather similar and, unfortunately, early photographers seem to have had a predilection for such pictures. In any case, there are three main sources of pictures which may be useful in historical interpretation.

The first major source is the series of photographs taken by the International Boundary Commission in 1873-74. Included are pictures of surveyors, Indians and Indian encampments and terrain taken in the Wood Mountain-Frenchman River area. A large part of the collection is on file at the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, but some photos of interest are also held by the Archives of Saskatchewan (Regina) and the Public Archives of Canada. For examples of the type of plates available, including several of particular interest, see G. MacEwan, *Sitting Bull* (Edmonton: 1973).

Secondly, the Photo Archives of the Glenbow-Alberta Institute of Calgary have a number of items in their collection pertaining to the North West Mounted Police at Wood Mountain. Identification numbers and short descriptions follow:

NA-343-1	Supt. L.N.F. Crozier, 1880
NA-354-9	Wood Mountain Post, 1888
NA-943-8	Wood Mountain Post, 1897
NA-943-9	Wood Mountain Post, 1897
NA-943-10	Wood Mountain Post, Const. Herous, 1897
NA-943-11	Trading post near Wood Mountain, 1897
NA-1171-2	NWMP Officers, ca. 1890 (included Macdonell)
NA-1771-1	Supt. J.M. Walsh, 1882
NA-2003-49	Wood Mountain Post Headquarters building and telegraph office, post-1885.

Parks Canada photo files for Ft. Walsh should also contain materials relating to the Wood Mountain detachment.

The last major source is Volume Two of B.B. Peel's "R.M.45" (M.A. thesis, University of Saskatchewan 1946), a collection of photographs from the Mankota area. Most of these relate to the homesteading period and to the 1930s. The volume can be acquired through inter-library loan. Negatives and prints should be available from the Archives of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, since a film strip was made up using these materials (Shelf List IID #29 "Mankota R.M. 45: Illustrated Cards for a film strip on the history of the R.M.").

A possible source of useful photographs is the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act. A number of their 'before and after' shots of irrigation and pasture research projects in the park area are extant. For examples, *see* J.H. Gray, *Men Against the Desert* (Saskatoon: 1967), and A.R. Turner, "How Saskatchewan dealt with her 'dust bowl'" *Geographical Magazine* 28 #4 (Aug., 1955), pp. 182-92.

APPENDIX F. SOURCES OF ILLUSTRATIONS (Figs. 1-21)

Almost all of the maps and diagrams used to illustrate this study are originals, for the simple reason that existing ones would not serve the purpose. Most were drawn using a number of different sources, and it was thought advisable to present these separately in order that explanations could be given where required. Two base maps were employed; one of the park area (defined in Ch. 1), and one of southwestern Saskatchewan. Both are somewhat simplified, sectional survey correction lines, meridian divergences, and parallel curves having been eliminated to make uniform blocks of townships. Since townships are the basic unit of presentation, accuracy is not greatly affected. All of the maps indicate the position of the three core areas of the park, usually with light dotted lines.

Figure 1. J.H. Richards, ed., Atlas of Saskatchewan (Saskatoon: 1969), pp. 42-43 "Physical Features"; and Rand McNally, Cosmopolitan World Atlas (New York: 1972, rev. ed.), p. 69 (Alberta), p. 70 (Saskatchewan), p. 102 (Montana) and p. 110 (North Dakota). This map is intended to give an idea of relative location, rather than exact distance.

Figure 2. Canada Dept. of Energy Mines and Resources, Surveys and Mapping Branch, National Topographic System Mapsheet 72G (Wood Mountain; 1:250,000 scale), 1965, 2nd ed. Maps in this series are hereafter cited as NTS, code number (name; scale).

Figure 3. S.H. Whitaker, "Geology of the Wood Mountain Area (72-G) Saskatchewan" (Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Illinois, 1965), Plate 1 (Surficial Geology) and Plate 5 (Glacial History).

Figure 4. Ibid, Plate 2 (Bedrock Topography), and p. 10, Fig. 4 (Physiographic Zones).

Figure 5. Ibid, p. 10, Fig. 4 for drainage basins, and NTS 72G (Wood Mountain; 1:250,000) for lakes and streams. In the latter case, only major systems and main branches are shown.

Figure 6. Adapted from Canada, ARDA, Canada Land Inventory (CLI) Mapsheet 72G (Wood Mountain; 1:250,000) "Soil Capability for Agriculture." This system uses seven classes of soil capability

for agriculture, the divisions being based on the intensity rather than the kind of limitation. Possible rather than actual use is evaluated. The three categories given here have been arrived at as follows: CLI classes 2 and 3 = High Productivity, CLI 4 and 5 = Fair to Low Productivity, and CLI 6 = Forage Crops Only. Much of CLI 5 is in fact little better than 6, being 'improvable' range.

Figure 7. From "Map Showing Wooded Tracts, etc." in R.G. McConnell, "Report on the Cypress Hills, Wood Mountain, and Adjacent Country" (Ottawa: Canadian Geological Survey, 1886), with some dates from Richards, op. cit., 11 "Historical Trails." This is a close approximation of the trail network existing in 1874. See Appendix C.

Figure 8. Ibid, plus the NWMP "Stations and Patrols" map of 1888 and township diagrams for the Old Pole trail and telegraph line. See Appendix C.

Figure 9. Ibid, plus NWMP "Stations and Patrols" maps for 1888, 1889, 1890, 1891, 1893, 1904, 1906, and 1909 (Archives of Saskatchewan, Regina) and data from the Annual Reports (see Ch. 3).

Figure 10. Wood Mountain ranch locations from local history references (see Ch. 6); Frenchman River ranch locations from Val Marie High School, Val-Echo (Val Marie, Sask.: 1955), p. 11 and other references (see Ch. 6); 1912 closure line position from C. Martin, Dominion Lands Policy (Toronto: 1973), p. 183, Fig. 3.

Figure 11. Extrapolated from H. Otterson, "The White Mud River Range Thirty years Ago," pp. 1, 14-19 and 21-22, Pamphlet File, Archives of Saskatchewan, Regina; Val Marie High School, op. cit., 11; and other references (see Ch. 6).

Figure 12. See Figs. 8 and 9, above, and Val Marie High School, op. cit., 8; the railway route is from NTS 72G (Wood Mountain).

Figure 13. From Joint Federal-Provincial Committee on the Proposed Grasslands National Park, A Proposed Grasslands National Park (Ottawa: 1976), pp. 10-11; A.R. Turner, "How Saskatchewan Dealt with her 'dust bowl' Geographical Magazine 28 #4 (Aug., 1955), pp. 182-92; and other references (see Ch. 6).

Figure 14. Map of Saskatchewan adapted from Richards, op. cit., p. 19 (showing the Soo Line and the township grid); preemption area boundaries are from Dominion Lands Act 7-8 Ed. VII (1908) c. 20 s. 27.

Figure 15. From township diagrams (Archives of Saskatchewan, Regina), and Public Archives of Canada, National Map Collection, Index to Township Plans of the Canadian West (Ottawa: 1974).

Figure 16. From NTS 72 (Regina: 1:1,000,000).

Figure 17. Ibid; the numbers of the recently created R.M.'s of Val Marie and Old Post (formerly L.I.D.'s 923 and 920, respectively) were not available.

Figure 18. See Table 25.

Figure 19. Land Ownership (a) from GAI/CPR 925-49 "Land Examination Files"; Soil Capability for Agriculture and terrain (B) from CLI 72G (see Fig. 6, above) and NTS 72G-1E and -1W (Canopus; 1:50,000). See Appendix A.

Figure 20. Reconstructed from farm unit descriptions in GAI/CPR 1882 "Accounts Ledger." See Appendix A.

Figure 21. Most of the data embodied in this diagram is taken from GAI/CPR 1882 "Accounts Ledger," supplemented by references to farm occupation in other C.P.R. sources. The balance was supplied by a generous application of educated guesswork. See Appendix A note 58, and the text on this problem.

APPENDIX G. A NOTE ON DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF THE GRASSLANDS AREA

No extensive demographic analysis of the Grasslands area has been attempted in this preliminary work. After several rounds of work with the Censuses of Canada and the quinquennial censuses of the prairie provinces, it was decided that the amount of research time consumed was not justified by the meagre rewards. Existing primary sources and secondary works appear reliable enough to suggest the general population characteristics of the area, albeit without detailed statistical verification.

A major problem encountered in trying to garner demographic data for a geographically integral unit is that there often is no geographical coincidence between the defined area and the contemporary census unit or division. In many cases there is enough coincidence to at least suggest the nature of population changes, but with respect to the Grasslands area there are special problems arising from the sparsity of the population. In the earliest censuses which include the area, the census division employed is so large as to take in an area several times larger than Grasslands. The lack of subdivision statistics makes isolation of the Grasslands area impossible. In later censuses, the Grasslands area is divided among so many census divisions that isolation is still extremely impractical, if not impossible. Changing subdivision units complicate the situation. It is possible that enough data could be obtained at the level of the township to provide a profile of the Grasslands population, but this would involve hundreds of pieces of data. The task would be onerous. Furthermore, the township unit is not continuously employed in the census, thereby creating undesirable gaps in the population profile. When one is working with small-unit studies, even a five-year gap is problematic.

With respect to the characteristics of the population (e.g. age, sex, education, etc.), the same problem of gaps is encountered. Adding to the confusion with characteristics like education and age, for example, is that the census does not use the same categories in every census year. Thus, in one year the age category of 6 to 10 years may be used, but in the next census the category of 5 to 13 years replaces it. This inconsistency is the bane of all demographers, and because this is a preliminary study of the Grasslands area no attempt was made to deal with it.

Inconsistency of a similar sort plagues analysis of the population according to ethnicity. Shifting political boundaries, particularly in Europe, and the arbitrary classification schemes used by census-takers, conspire to make analysis extremely complicated. The case of those of Ukrainian origin may be taken as an example. Until 1931 Ukrainians were classified as Galacians, Ruthenians, Roumanians, and Poles, among others. With regard to the Grasslands area, which contained a large number of Roumanians, one can never be sure whether one is counting Roumanians or Ukrainians. Nor can this problem be solved by recourse to statistics on the country of origin. To use the Ukrainian example again, many were not born in the Ukraine but in Russia, or in Roumania, or in Poland. The presence of a large number of Americans in the Grasslands area introduces another complication. Many of these were British, Norwegians, and Germans, yet they immigrated from the United States and are classified as American-born. The only solution to this problem may be research with the original census enumeration rolls and these are unavailable to the public for a period of one hundred years after the date of enumeration.

APPENDIX H. GROWTH INDICES FOR SELECTED SERVICE CENTRES

Centre	Population 1926	Population 1961	Index of Growth (1926 = 100)
Admiral	244	139	57.0
Aneroid	336	279	83.0
Assiniboia	1245	2491	200.1
Bracken	146	132	90.4
Cadillac	171	289	169.0
Glentworth	-	150	-
Gravelbourg	1201	1499	124.8
Hazenmore	254	149	58.7
Kincaid	300	310	103.3
Lafleche	555	749	135.1
Limerick	422	210	49.8
Mankota	-	477	-
Mazenod	180	121	67.2
Meyronne	357	161	45.1
Orkney	-	99	-
Palmer	75	104	138.7
Ponteix	588	887	150.8
Rockglen	-	492	-
Val Marie	-	443	-
Wood Mountain	-	135	-
Woodrow	223	155	69.5

Key: 1) Growing centre - index over 122; 2) Stable centre - index between 100 and 121.9; 3) Declining centre - index less than 100.

Source: Leo F. Kristjanson, Population Trends in the Incorporated Centres of Saskatchewan, 1926-1961 (Saskatoon: Centre for Community Studies, 1963.)

APPENDIX I. GRASSLANDS NEWSPAPERS

ASSINIBOIA	Recorder 1930-31
	Reporter 1925-30
	Times 1912-present
CADILLAC	Journal 1925-31
	News 1918-19 (published at Woodrow)
GRAVELBOURG	Enterprise 1915-21
	L'Etoile de Gravelbourg 1922-present
	La Quinzaine 1940?-present
	Standard 1921-22
	Tenir 1935-39
KINCAID	Star 1916-37
	Weekly Leader ?-1915
LAFLECHE	Advocate 1913?-1922
	Press 1922-present
LIMERICK	Letter 1918-21
	Leader 1922 (published at Kincaid)
	Reporter 1927-29 or 1930 (published at Assiniboia)
	Record 1918-1919 (published at Woodrow)
MEYRONNE	Independent 1913-1942
PINTO CREEK	Star 1942-present (published at Moose Jaw)
PONTEIX	Herald 1942-present
	Spectator 1914-15?
ROCKGLEN	Review 1926-36; 1938
VAL MARIE	Bulletin 1940-present
WOODROW	Times 1918-19

SOURCE: Christine Macdonald. Historical Directory of Saskatchewan Newspapers (Saskatoon: Saskatchewan Archives Board, 1951).

APPENDIX J. INCORPORATION OF RURAL MUNICIPALITIES

Name	Number	Year of Incorporation
Waverley	44	1913
Mankota	45	1913
Glen McPherson	46	1913
Stonehenge	73	1911
Wood River	74	1912
Pinto Creek	75	1913
Auvergne	76	1913
Wise Creek	77	1913

ENDNOTES

Chapter I The Park Area

1 P.S. Sharp, *Whoop-Up Country* (Minneapolis, Minn.: 1955), p. 6 and J.G. Nelson, *The Last Refuge* (Montreal: 1973), p. 14.

2 G.M. Dawson, *Report on the Geology and Resources of the Region in the Vicinity of the Forty-Ninth Parallel* (Montreal: 1875), p. 103 below.

3 C. Rondeau and A. Chabot, *History of Willow Bunch, Sask., 1870-1970* (Winnipeg: 1970), p. 47.

4 B.B. Peel, "R.M. 45," (M.A. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1946), Vol. I p. 3.

5 L.S. Russell, *Dinosaur Hunting in Western Canada* (Toronto: 1966), p. 5.

6 Peel, op. cit., p. 3, n. 2.

7 W. Stegner, *Wolf Willow* (New York: 1966), p. 6 notes that although it "has changed its name since my time to conform with American maps.... We always called it the Whitemud, from the stratum of pure white kaolin exposed along its valley."

8 Dawson, op. cit., attached map.

9 Val Marie High School, *Val Echo* (hereafter cited as VMHS, *Val Echo*) (Val Marie, Sask.: 1955), p. 8 (map). The mileage is from Eastend. The other crossings on the map - Cree and Breed - may have been named later but were probably in use in the 1870s.

10 Peel, op. cit., p. 6 and G. Douglas, "Wood Mountain Tales," p. 11, Saskatchewan Historical Society (hereafter cited as SHS), 18 (4), Archives of Saskatchewan, Regina, Sask.

11 S.H. Whitaker, "Geology of the Wood Mountain area (72-G), Saskatchewan" (Ph.D. dissertation, Univ. of Illinois, 1965), pp. 28-39; J.H. Richards, ed., *Atlas of Saskatchewan* (Saskatoon, Sask.: 1969), has a very useful introduction to the geology of the province.

12 W. Wedel, *Prehistoric Man on the Great Plains* (Norman, Okla.: 1961), pp. 44-45.

13 Whitaker, op. cit., pp. 17, 40-42 and Plate 2, and Richards, op. cit., pp. 41 and 45-47.

14 Ibid, pp. 19-23, 26 and Plate 1, and Richards, op. cit., pp. 48 and 50-51.

15 Following section based on Whitaker, op. cit., pp. 76-81 and Plate 5.

16 Following section based on Whitaker, op. cit., pp. 9-12, 28-52 and Plate 1.

17 Note that a portion of the Cypress Hills Uplands is found at the western periphery. It is essentially similar to the other upland complex, but is slightly lower and lacks the Tertiary gravel cap.

18 Decorby to Lacombe, 1879. Quoted by Rondeau and Chabot, op. cit., p. 63.

19 Peel, op. cit., p. 7.

20 Whitaker, op. cit., pp. 82, 87 and Plate 2.

21 Richards, op. cit., p. 60; J. Mitchell et al., Soil Survey of Southern Saskatchewan (Saskatoon, Sask.: 1944), p. 18; M.D. Cranna, "Killdeer Badlands-A Prairie Natural Area," Blue Jay Vol. 31 No. 2 (June, 1973), p. 68; and R.T. Coupland, A Theme Study of Natural Grassland in Western Canada (Saskatoon, Sask.: 1973), pp. 27-28.

22 Following section based on Mitchell, op. cit., and Whitaker, op. cit., supplemented by the soil capability ratings of the Canada Land Inventory's Soil Capability for Agriculture: Wood Mountain Map Sheet Area, 72G (Ottawa: 1967).

23 H.C. Moss, A Guide to Understanding Saskatchewan Soils (Saskatoon, Sask.: 1965), pp. 4-5 and 38.

24 Ibid, p. 19.

25 Whitaker, op. cit., p. 82.

26 Mitchell, op. cit., p. 58.

27 Ibid, pp. 67-71 and J.H. Gray, Men Against the Desert (Saskatoon Sask.: 1967), pp. 2 and 26. The Saharan landscape pictured on p. 174 was Cadillac in the Thirties. Gray also deals with recovery methods.

28 Ibid, p. 181. More sophisticated methods used since have not resulted in a substantial change in the classification.

29 Peel, op. cit., p. 100.

30 Coupland, op. cit., p. 7.

31 Ibid, p. 12.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid, pp. 32-33.

34 Ibid, p. 42.

35 Ibid, Ch. II (especially pp. 36-47 regarding Mixed Prairie), for a technical discussion of zonal types.

36 R.G. McConnell, "Report on the Cypress Hills, Wood Mountain, and Adjacent Country" (Ottawa: Canadian Geological Survey, 1886), enclosed "Map Showing Wooded Tracts, etc.". Compared with modern topographical maps, this seems to show that tree distribution has not changed a great deal since 1885, except for those now present in towns and in farmstead shelterbelts.

37 Coupland, op. cit., pp. 51-56 regarding 'subclimax communities', and Cranna, op. cit., pp. 72-73.

38 J.G. Nelson, "Changing Fauna of the Northern Plains Area: Images and Effects," in J.G. Nelson, Man's Impact on the Western Canadian Landscape (Toronto: 1976), p. 67.

39 Cranna, op. cit., pp. 74-75; J.D. Soper, "Field Data on the Mammals of Southern Saskatchewan" Canadian Field Naturalist, Vol. 75, No. 1 (1961), pp. 23-41.

40 I. Cowie, The Company of Adventurers (Toronto: 1913), p. 258.

41 F.G. Roe, The North American Buffalo (Toronto: 1972), pp. 479 and 485-86.

42 Peel, op. cit., p. 33.

43 J.D. Chandler, "Wolves Reported in the Val Marie District" Blue Jay Vol. 22, No. 4 (Dec., 1964), p. 173; Z.M. and M.A. Hamilton (hereafter cited as Hamiltons), These are the Prairies (Regina and Toronto: 1948), pp. 99-105 regarding 'buffalo wolves' and cattle in the area southeast of Wood Mountain in the early 1900s.

44 Quoted by Hamiltons, op. cit., p. 240 (their transcription), from a personal interview.

45 W.L. Morton, "The Significance of Site in the Settlement of the American and Canadian Wests" Agricultural History Vol. 25 (1951), p. 97.

Chapter II Time of the Buffalo: Indians, Fur Traders and the Métis

1 H.M. Wormington, An Introduction to the Archaeology of Alberta, Canada (Denver, Colo.: 1965), pp. 198-99.

2 W. Wedel, op. cit., 1961), p. 243.

3 J.F.V. Millar et al, "The Southwestern Saskatchewan Archaeological Project: Preliminary Report, 1971," Na'Pao Vol. 3, No. 2 (July, 1972), p. 3.

4 Z.S. Pohorecky Saskatchewan Indian Heritage (Saskatoon, Sask.: 1970), p. 11 time chart.

5 See, for example, Wormington, op. cit., pp. 183-98 and Wedel, op. cit., pp. 249-59. The nomenclature and dates vary from author to author, but the basic model is the same.

6 Pohorecky, Heritage, p. 10.

7 T.F. Kehoe, "The Distribution and Implications of Fluted Points in Saskatchewan," American Antiquity Vol. 31, No. 4 (April, 1966), pp. 530-36; Millar, "Project." p. 11.

8 Wedel, op. cit., p. 249.

9 Ibid, p. 254 and Z.S. Pohorecky, "Archaeology and Prehistory: The Saskatchewan Case," in R. Allen, ed., Region of the Mind (Regina, Sask.: 1973), p. 61.

10 Pohorecky, "Archaeology," p. 62.

11 Wormington, op. cit., p. 192; Wedel, op. cit., p. 255.

12 Ibid.

13 Millar, op. cit., p. 15.

14 Ibid, 11; D.M. Loveridge, A Review of the Literature on the Proposed Grasslands National Park (Winnipeg: 1977), p. 29.

15 Wormington, op. cit., p. 193 and Pohorecky, Heritage, pp. 18-19.

16 See especially T.F. Kehoe, The Gull Lake Site (Milwaukee, Wisc.: 1975). This is a major site near Shaunavon, northwest of the park area.

17 Wormington, op. cit., p. 196.

18 Ibid, p. 197.

19 W.P. Webb, The Great Plains (New York: 1973), p. 58; also F.G. Roe, The Indian and the Horse (Norman, Okla.: 1955), p. 379. The latter work is a meticulous critical examination of the evidence concerning the impact of the horse which fully supports Webb's assertion. An excellent illustration of the horse as an 'intensifier' is seen in the case of warfare (Ch. 12). Roe notes that "Beyond reasonable doubt tribal wars prevailed from remote ages," the horse affecting only their range and intensity (pp. 245-46).

20 Ibid., p. 58; also Wedel, op. cit., p. 22 and Wormington, op. cit., pp. 197-201.

21 Ibid, p. 50.

22 Roe, Horse, Ch. 5 which presents the evidence.

23 Quoted by J.G. Nelson, The Last Refuge (Montreal: 1973), p. 51.

24 F.G. Roe, The North American Buffalo (Toronto: 1972), Chs. 19 and 20.

25 I.M. Spry, "The Great Transformation," in R. Allen, ed., *Man and Nature on the Prairies* (Regina: 1976), pp. 21-23 and Nelson, op. cit., pp. 95 and 111.
26 Pohorecky, *Heritage*, pp. 5 and 48.
27 A.J. Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade* (Toronto and Buffalo: 1974), p. 102; also Nelson, op. cit., p. 32.
28 Ibid, p. 182 and distribution maps pp. 97 and 101.
29 Ibid, p. 104.
30 Nelson, op. cit., p. 55.
31 Pohorecky, *Heritage*, 49; the Gros Ventre were decimated by the Crow in the 1820s and by the Piegan in the 1860s.
32 Ibid, p. 42.
33 In the 1850s Palliser called the South Saskatchewan River a buffalo reserve between the Cree and Blackfoot; I.M. Spry, ed., 34 *The Papers of the Palliser Expedition* (Toronto: 1968), p. 146.
34 The Stevens Expedition of 1853; Nelson, op. cit., p. 95.
35 I. Cowie, op. cit., p. 304; Nelson, op. cit., p. 111 supports this.
36 Ibid, pp. 259, 205 and 435.
37 Ray, op. cit., pp. 182-84 (based on the Palliser census of 1863).
38 G. Laviolette, *Sioux Indians in Canada* (Regina, Sask.: 1944), pp. 13-14 for a summary discussion of the different Sioux groups and their tribal areas. The Santees include the Santee and Sisseton councils, and the Tetons, seven councils (Brule, Sans Arcs, Miniconjou, Two Kettle, Blackfeet, Oglala, Hunkpapa).
39 Ibid, pp. 22-25.
40 Ray, op. cit., pp. 6 and 14.
41 G. MacEwan, *Sitting Bull* (Edmonton, Alta.: 1973), p. 8.
42 Ibid, 17 and Laviolette, op. cit., pp. 25-27.
43 R.M. Utley, *Frontiersmen in Blue* (New York: 1967), pp. 261-88 has a good summary of this situation and the military campaigns of 1862-64.
44 Laviolette, op. cit., p. 35.
45 Ibid, pp. 49-64; Utley, op. cit., pp. 271-72. Sitting Bull was part of Standing Buffalo's main band at this time. He is rumoured to have been born at Wood Mountain about 1831 (MacEwan, op. cit., p. 11).
46 Laviolette, op. cit., p. 68. NWMP, *Report for 1877*, p. 28 (Letter of Dec. 31, 1876, Walsh-Macleod).
47 NWMP, *Report for 1874*, Diary Aug. 12-14.
48 Nelson, op. cit., pp. 116-17. In 1870 the Blackfoot had lost a substantial part of their population to smallpox, and 300 Piegan had died in the Marias River Massacre in the U.S. *See also* Ray, op. cit., pp. 191-92 regarding the smallpox epidemic of 1869-70.
49 Roe, *Buffalo*, p. 467.
50 Ibid, pp. 396-97. In both 1868 and 1873 travellers moving west from Ft. Garry first encountered buffalo near Wood Mountain. The NWMP in 1874 also found this to be the case.
51 Nelson, op. cit., pp. 32-36.
52 Ibid, pp. 44-48.
53 Ibid, p. 81; *see also* pp. 78-81, and 170-72 for a discussion of the Plains Indian attitude towards trapping. The park area is included in Nelson's 'Cypress Hills area'.
54 Ibid, pp. 53-56.

55 P.S. Sharp, Whoop-Up Country (Minneapolis, Minn.: 1955), p. 34; mainly to trade with the Blackfoot.

56 Nelson, op. cit., p. 81; Ft. Benton, south of the Cypress Hills, was the head of navigation.

57 Ibid, p. 87,

58 Sharp, op. cit., p. 43; buffalo hide was much in demand for machinery belting after 1871.

59 Ibid, p. 37.

60 Ibid, p. 39.

61 J.C. Ewers, The Blackfeet (Norman, Okla.: 1958), p. 261.

62 Sharp, op. cit., p. 43.

63 R.C. Macleod, The North-West Mounted Police and Law Enforcement, 1873-1905 (Toronto and Buffalo: 1976), p. 17.

64 Nelson, op. cit., p. 107.

65 Sharp, op. cit., p. 41.

66 Ibid, p. 61 and Nelson, op. cit., p. 108.

67 NWMP, Report for 1874, p. 26, and Macleod, NWMP, p. 25.

68 A. Campbell and W.J. Twining, Report upon the survey of the Boundary, etc. (Washington, D.C.: 1878), Report of Capt. J.F. Gregory for 1874, p. 281.

69 G.M. Dawson, Report on the Geology and Resources of the Region in the Vicinity of the Forty-Ninth Parallel, etc. (Montreal: 1875), pp. 295-96.

70 Cowie, op. cit., p. 433; Cowie was in the Cypress Hills at the time. Oulette is also spelled Oullette in some sources.

71 Macleod, op. cit., p. 25 and Sharp, op. cit., pp. 217-18.

72 B. Rose, Wood Mountain - Willowbunch coal area, Sask. (Ottawa: 1916), p. 6 and G. Douglas, "Wood Mountain Tales," p. 12, SHS 18 (4), Archives of Saskatchewan, Regina, Sask.; Leighton and Jordon arrived in 1879 and may have been representatives of T.C. Power of Ft. Benton. Leighton was freighting in the area as early as 1874, and may also have traded there earlier. Campbell and Twining, op. cit., pp. 281-82.

73 Sharp, op. cit., pp. 227-28 describes the decline and fall of the Ft. Benton influence in Canada after 1880.

74 The generic term "Métis" as used here and below refers to the local Métis community, of which French Canadians were an important part.

75 Roe, Buffalo, p. 337; W.L. Morton, "The Battle of the Grand Coteau, July 13 and 14, 1851" in D. Swainson, ed., Historical Essays on the Prairie Provinces (Toronto: 1970), pp. 45-59 for an excellent study of one particular hunt.

76 W.L. Morton, Manitoba: A History (Toronto: 1967), p. 104.

77 H.Y. Hind, Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition, etc (New York: 1969), Vol. II, pp. 306 and 318.

78 VMHS, (Val Marie, Sask.: 1955), p. 9.

79 M. Giraud, "Métis Settlement in the North-West Territories," translated by C.M. Chesney, Saskatchewan History, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Winter, 1955), p. 2. The data relating to the Wood Mountain area in this excellent chapter from Giraud's Le Métis Canadien are largely from the Roman Catholic Archiepiscopalian Archives in St. Boniface.

80 B.B. Peel, "R. M. 45," (M.A. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1946), Vol. I, p. 39 and Giraud, op. cit., p. 14, note 120. Father Decorby was based at Wood Mountain during this year.

81 Giraud, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

82 Ibid, p. 14.

83 Cowie, op. cit., p. 255.

84 Ibid, p. 158.

85 Sharp, op. cit., p. 51 for a description of this occupation.

86 Cowie, op. cit., p. 258.

87 In the spring of 1871 at the Dirt Hills Cowie met "Mr. Joseph McKay, who had been wintering at Wood Mountain, trading for Fort Ellice." Cowie himself was on the way to Wood Mountain "to buy pemmican at any price" and obtained some from "Kissis-away Tanner" at an outrageous one (op. cit., p. 420).

88 Rondeau and Chabot, op. cit., p. 30.

89 Ibid, pp. 30 and 255 deal with numbers. Giraud, op. cit., p. 3 notes that the migration was only part of the general movement west that year, and makes a useful distinction between the two groups - permanent and nomadic - involved.

90 Ibid, p. 31; G. Shepherd, "The Early Roman Catholic Missionaries of South Western Saskatchewan," p. 1, II.A.44, Archives of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Sask., says the first settlement was located near Eastend, but this is not confirmed in any other source.

91 Giraud, op. cit., p. 12, note 88.

92 Rondeau and Chabot, op. cit., p. 42 and Douglas, op. cit., p. 10. There are a number of accounts of Legare's early career extant, which give the same general outline (see also G. Shepherd, "Jean Louis Legare 1841-1917," p. II.A.44, Archives of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Sask.). Few agree in details, however. Douglas and Shepherd give the date of his first Wood Mountain assignment as 1869-70, but Rondeau's date of 1870-71 seems much more likely in the context of other information (including Douglas's; note the contradiction in dating, p. 10).

93 Ibid, pp. 46-48 and Douglas, op. cit., p. 10.

94 Mrs. W.G. Ross, "History of Wood Mountain (Montagne de Bois) and Fort Walsh", Regina: 1927, Archives of Saskatchewan, Regina, p. 7 and Giraud, op. cit., p. 12, note 88.

95 Cowie, op. cit., p. 433.

96 Douglas, op. cit., p. 11 and Giraud, op. cit., p. 13.

97 Giraud, op. cit., pp. 12-13; the comment refers to 1873.

98 Douglas, op. cit., p. 11 and Rondeau and Chabot, op. cit., pp. 51, 53 and 58.

99 Rondeau and Chabot, op. cit., p. 57.

100 J.E. Parsons, West on the 49th Parallel (New York: 1963), pp. 80-81. Anderson noted that 80 families usually wintered there.

101 Ibid, pp. 96-98.

102 Rondeau and Chabot, op. cit., pp. 57-58.

103 Dawson, op. cit., p. 294.

104 Ibid, p. 294.

105 Ibid, p. 295.

106 Ibid, pp. 295-96.

107 Ibid, p. 295.

108 NWMP, Report for 1874, Diary Aug. 10, 15, 21 and 22.

109 Rondeau and Chabot, op. cit., p. 62; for the Fort Ellice, Swan River and Qu'Appelle reserves.

110 J.P. Turner, The North-West Mounted Police 1873-1893 (Ottawa: 1950), Vol. I, p. 261.

111 Rondeau and Chabot, op. cit., p. 61.
112 Ibid, pp. 62 and 226.
113 Shepherd, "Missionaries," p. 2.
114 Rondeau and Chabot, op. cit., p. 226.
115 Ibid, pp. 79-80; according to Lacombe, 1877.
116 V. LaChance, "The mounted police detachment at Wood Mountain and its activities from the organization of the force in 1873 until 1882," Canadian Defence Quarterly Vol. 6, No. 4 (July, 1929), p. 496.
117 NWMP, Report for 1877, pp. 26-27, Letter of Aug. 18, 1876 (Crozier to Irvine).
118 Douglas, op. cit., p. 11.
119 For example, MacEwan, op. cit., p. 149 (in 1879).
120 Saskatchewan Herald, July 14, 1877; quoted by MacEwan, op. cit., p. 100.
121 NWMP, Report for 1878, p. 23.
122 NWMP, Report for 1879, p. 3.
123 Rondeau and Chabot, op. cit., pp. 93-94 and NWMP, Report for 1879, p. 14 (Walsh). The number of Métis involved is uncertain. Rondeau says 500 families from Wood Mountain, the Cypress Hills and Batoche went south, but Walsh stated that only 300 families were detained. Not all of those who went seem to have been involved in the incident.
124 Turner, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 465-66 has a transcript of the negotiations; also NWMP, Report for 1879, p. 14 and Rondeau and Chabot, op. cit., p. 95.
125 Rondeau and Chabot, op. cit., p. 95.
126 Ibid, 104 and NWMP, Report for 1879, p. 11 (census) and pp. 15-16.
127 Ibid, p. 105.
128 NWMP, Report for 1880, p. 34.
129 Rondeau and Chabot, op. cit., p. 256; earlier priests had only missionary appointments.
130 Ibid, 111; Legare's volume of business at Wood Mountain seems to have declined by about two-thirds by 1882 (p. 106).
131 Ibid, pp. 41 and 121.
132 Ibid, p. 112; see Roe, Buffalo, 480 regarding the availability of buffalo after 1880.
133 D.C. McGowan, Grassland Settlers (Regina: 1975), p. 23.
134 Rondeau and Chabot, op. cit., p. 112; McGowan, op. cit., p. 23 notes that the going price for bones at Swift Current was about $8.00 per ton, but Legare had to transport his to the railway. See also Hamiltons, op. cit., pp. 106-7.
135 Turner, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 409 and 442-43.
136 In a note appended to Shepherd, "Missionaries," p. 4 a Dr. Morice O.M.I. states that they were worried about their land and had requested a survey. This, however, took place after 1885 (see below).
137 Father St. Germaine had left Willow Bunch, but was sent back in 1884 by Bishop Tache and Lt. Gov. Dewdney "to prevent the Métis of that area from joining Riel's revolutionary movement" (Rondeau and Chabot, op. cit., p. 256).
138 Rondeau and Chabot, op. cit., p. 131 notes that the younger Métis favoured Legare and the older ones Riel.
139 Ibid.

140 NWMP, *Report for 1885*, p. 63.

141 One other story in connection with the Rebellion is worth noting. There is a very strong local tradition at Willow Bunch that Dewdney attempted, through Pascal Bonneau Sr., to arrange for Riel's escape after the trial. Due to an informant this plan failed. The incident is stated as fact by Bonneau's daughter (Hamiltons, op. cit., p. 57) and by other local historians (Rondeau and Chabot, op. cit., p. 258). Bonneau and his brother were in charge of Riel's body after the execution.

142 Canada. Department of Interior, Dominion Lands Survey File No. 114778, Memos and letters of April 22, May 3, May 13 and May 20, 1886, Archives of Saskatchewan, Regina, Sask. Note the blinding speed with which this moved through the bureaucracy, suggesting that it was treated as payment of a political debt.

143 W.F. King and J.S. Dennis, "General Report of Operations from 1869 to 1889," C.S.P. 55 Vic. (1892) No. [illegible] Pt. VI, Department of Interior, Topo. Surveys Branch, p. 74 and Rondeau and Chabot, op. cit., p. 134.

144 Rondeau and Chabot, op. cit., p. 134.

145 Ibid, p. 175.

146 For example, Hamiltons, op. cit., p. 116.

Chapter III The North West Mounted Police 1874-1918

1 R.C. Macleod, *The North-West Mounted Police and Law Enforcement* 1873-1905 (Toronto and Buffalo: 1976), pp. 7-21 (Ch. 2).

2 W.L. Morton, *The Critical Years* (Toronto: 1964), p. 223.

3 Macleod, op. cit., p. 3.

4 Statutes of Canada, 36 Vic. (1873), ca. 35.

5 Macleod, op. cit., pp. 34-36.

6 It should be noted that, contrary to popular opinion, then and now, the Cypress Hills Massacre had little to do with the formation of the force, although it did affect the planning of its first operation. For a comprehensive recent study of the massacre and its effects *see* P. Goldring, "The Cypress Hills Massacre - a Century's Retrospect," *Saskatchewan History* Vol. 26, No. 3 (Autumn, 1973), pp. 81-102.

7 Macleod, op. cit., pp. 23-24.

8 The poor quality of the information available is evident from French's remark that only one man in Winnipeg knew anything about "the portion of the country to which we were going." This helpful soul told him, "Well, if you have luck, you may get back by Christmas, with forty per cent. of your horses" (*Report for 1874*), p. 10). During the first half of the trip French generally had to rely on Palliser's unreliable map (Ibid, p. 12).

9 Historical Society of Alberta, *A Chronicle of the Canadian West: NWMP Report for 1875* (Calgary: 1975), p. 31 secs. 5 and 6. This confidential report was not released to the public along with Selby-Smyth's general report of 1875. Its recent publication by the society in company with the unpublished NWMP Report for 1875 is very welcome.

10 NWMP, *Report for 1874*, p. 12 ff.; but *see also* S.W. Horrall, "The March West," in H.A. Dempsey, ed., *Men in Scarlet* (Calgary: 1974), pp. 20-21 who says that the police were ordered north to avoid

supposed Sioux concentrations. There is no mention of this in French's report.

11 Ibid, Diary Aug. 4.
12 Ibid, Diary Aug. 15; Ch. 2.
13 Ibid, Diary Aug. 10 and Aug. 14.
14 Ibid, p. 12 and Diary Aug. 17 and Aug. 18.
15 Ibid, Diary Aug. 18.
16 Ibid, Diary Aug. 21 and Aug. 22.
17 Ibid, Diary Aug. 21.
18 Ibid, p. 18.
19 Ibid, Diary Oct. 7.
20 Ibid; also p. 11.
21 Ibid, p. 18 and Diary Oct. 7, Oct. 9 and Oct. 10; V. La Chance, "The mounted police detachment at Wood Mountain and its activities from the organization of the force in 1873 until 1882," Canadian Defence Quarterly Vol. 6, No. 4 (July, 1929), p. 493 (regarding the constables).
22 Ibid, p. 16.
23 Ibid, p. 26.
24 Quoted by Macleod, op. cit., p. 25.
25 The above paragraph is based on La Chance, op. cit., p. 494, who refers in the text to a report made "Early in 1875" by French. While the specific report could not be found, La Chance's material rings true in content and context, and his use of a direct quotation from the report indicates firsthand access. J.P. Turner, The North-West Mounted Police 1873-1893 (Ottawa: 1950), Vol. I p. 262 has a garbled and ambiguously dated section which appears to have been drawn from the same document. The material is not from the annual reports for 1874 or 1875.
26 La Chance, op. cit., p. 493 and Turner, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 251.
27 NWMP, Report for 1875, p. 9 (Sept. 28).
28 La Chance, op. cit., p. 494.
29 NWMP, Report for 1877 (Letter of May 26; summary of Sioux situation to date).
30 Ibid, p. 24 (Letter of July 1).
31 Turner, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 281 and 308.
32 NWMP, Report for 1877, pp. 25-27 (Letter of Aug. 18, 1876, Crozier to Macleod).
33 Ibid, pp. 28-29 (Letter of Dec. 31, 1876, Walsh to Macleod).
34 J. Jennings, "The Plains Indian and the Law," in H.A. Dempsey, ed., Men in Scarlet (Calgary: 1974), especially pp. 58-59 and 63.
35 Macleod, op. cit., p. 30.
36 NWMP, Report for 1877, p. 30.
37 La Chance, op. cit., p. 494; sometimes spelled McDonell or Macdonel.
38 NWMP, Report for 1877, p. 27 and 32 (Letters of March 27 and April 13).
39 Ibid, p. 31 (Letter of March 15, Walsh to Irvine).
40 Ibid, p. 35 (Letter of June 6); camped at "the Holes, an old battleground of the Crees and Salteaux, about 140 miles due east of here [Ft. Walsh], on the plains shewn on the map as Buffalo Plains" - probably in tp. 4-11 W3.
41 Ibid, pp. 35-41. (Irvine's report on the conferences, with transcripts); also pp. 47-52 for transcript of the Sitting Bull Commission council, and Ch. 4 below.

42 Ibid, pp. 42-43 (Letters of Aug. 15 and Aug. 24), and Ch. 4 below.

43 Ibid, p. 23 (distribution list); nine men in October plus other reinforcements and withdrawals. *See* La Chance, op. cit., 496.

44 Turner, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 333.

45 Waseecha Hoska (pseud.), "An Idyll of Wood Mountain," *Scarlet and Gold*, Vol. 15 (1933-34), p. 47.

46 NWMP, *Report for 1878*, p. 21 and Turner, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 400. Turner (Vol. I, p. 390) notes that in May of 1878, when the police headquarters was moved to Ft. Walsh, "plans were ... laid to erect a small stockaded fort at Wood Mountain, and to place a full troop there" to watch the Sioux. Neither step was carried out.

47 Ibid, p. 26; La Chance, op. cit., p. 497; and NWMP, *Report for 1879*, p. 15 (Walsh).

48 NWMP, *Report for 1879*, pp. 12 and 16 (Walsh).

49 Ibid, p. 11 (Walsh); Turner, op. cit., pp. 422 and 442; and G. MacEwan, *Sitting Bull* (Edmonton: 1973), p. 150. Also Ch. 2 above.

50 Ibid, p. 15 (Walsh).

51 Turner, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 518.

52 Ibid, pp. 518, 521 and 536.

53 Macleod, op. cit., p. 30.

54 Ibid, pp. 31-32. *See* Walsh's disclaimer in NWMP, *Report for 1880*, p. 29.

55 NWMP, *Report for 1880*, pp. 30-31 (Crozier).

56 Ibid, p. 33.

57 Ibid, p. 34.

58 NWMP, *Report for 1881*, p. 11, 13-14 (Irvine) and Turner, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 650. During 1882, also, the U.S. Army was driving Canadian Indians north over the border, causing further turbulence (Turner, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 657 and P.S. Sharp, *Whoop-Up Country* (Minneapolis, Minn.: 1955), pp. 155-56).

59 Turner, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 575.

60 NWMP, *Report for 1881*, p. 12.

61 NWMP, *Report for 1882*, p. 14 and Turner, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 663.

62 Ibid, p. 9 (Irvine).

63 NWMP, *Report for 1883*, p. 20 (Irvine).

64 Macleod, op. cit., p. 37; also p. 21.

65 Ibid, p. 38.

66 NWMP, *Report for 1883*, pp. 33-34 advising that a new post be built (*see* above).

67 Turner, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 54-55.

68 NWMP, *Report for 1884*, p. 16.

69 Rondeau and Chabot, op. cit., p. 131 suggests that this was a coincidence.

70 NWMP, *Report for 1885*, p. 63; Deane and Turner, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 145-49 and 157. Several of the Wood Mountain Sioux were also employed as police scouts (*Report for 1885*, p. 63; op. cit., Vol. II, p. 149; and Ch. 4 below.

71 Ibid, p. 63.

72 Ibid, p. 64.

73 Ibid, p. 65.

74 Ibid, p. 15 (Irvine) and Turner, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 227. Since it was easily followed, the line came to mark a new trail from Moose Jaw to Wood Mountain, later known as the "Old Pole Trail" (the original being called the 'old trail'). Despite annual requests, a direct line to Regina was not put in until 1893.

75 Turner, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 227.

76 NWMP, Report for 1885, p. 16 (Irvine).

77 For example, Turner, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 239. When a horse theft was reported at Moose Mountain, 20 men were immediately sent there, and five were left on the spot afterwards.

78 NWMP, Report for 1886, p. 7 (Herchmer).

79 Macleod, op. cit., pp. 4-5; see 45-48 for the following.

80 NWMP, Report for 1886, p. 33 (Gagnon).

81 Ibid, pp. 33-34.

82 Ibid, p. 77 (distribution list).

83 For example, NWMP, Report for 1888, p. 112 and Report for 1889, p. 97.

84 This is the site of the present, reconstructed post, which approximates its form in the 1890s.

85 NWMP, Report for 1887, p. 89.

86 NWMP, Report for 1888, p. 12.

87 Ibid, p. 98; see Ch. 6 below.

88 NWMP, Report for 1891, p. 52 and Report for 1899, p. 63.

89 NWMP Report for 1894, p. 86, for instance.

90 See detachment reports for 1888, 1891 and 1899 - the reason for doing so is fairly obvious.

91 NWMP, Report for 1889, p. 97.

92 For example NWMP, Report for 1888, p. 114 and Report for 1899, p. 64. McConnell, op. cit., p. 47 notes that the police had a mine in operation in 1885.

93 NWMP, Report for 1887, p. 87.

94 This list, and especially the dates, may not be entirely complete or accurate since it is culled from Annual Report references, annual force distribution lists, and the various Stations and Patrols maps. Police officers were not too consistent about listing or mentioning such minor assignments. Willow Bunch, however, was virtually a detachment in its own right since a separate winter contingent was maintained there in the years listed.

95 NWMP, Report for 1890, p. 116. These were ordered in all divisions by the commissioner (Macleod, op. cit., p. 46). Wood Mountain post had sent out such special patrols as early as 1888 (Report for 1888, p. 111).

96 Scouts: see NWMP, Report for 1887, p. 9 and Report for 1891, p. 54.

97 NWMP, Report for 1892, p. 81.

98 Ibid, p. 80.

99 S.D. Hanson, "Policing the International Boundary Area in Saskatchewan, 1890-1910," Saskatchewan History, Vol. 19, No. 2 (1966), p. 63 regarding the 1893 quarantine regulations against glanders, anthrax and scab; and D.H. Breen, "The Mounted Police and the Ranching Frontier" in H.A. Dempsey, ed., Men in Scarlet (Calgary: 1974), pp. 123-214 on the American cattle invasion of the early 1890s.

100 NWMP, Report for 1893, p. 39.

101 Ibid, p. 50 for a full description of the new patrol routes.

102 NWMP, Report for 1894, p. 53.

103 Ibid, p. 87.

104 NWMP, Report for 1896, p. 65.

105 NWMP, *Report for 1898*, p. 65.

106 Macleod, op. cit., p. 46.

107 *See* relevant annual reports and distribution lists.

108 NWMP, *Report for 1895*, p. 86 regarding manpower cuts and patrols.

109 NWMP, *Report for 1899*, p. 64; *Report for 1900*, p. 1; and *Report for 1901*, pp. 1-2.

110 Ibid, pp. 49, 63 and 65.

111 Hamiltons op. cit., pp. 68 and 121 for examples of the former. Breen, op. cit., has an excellent discussion of police-rancher relationships in southern Alberta. Most of his observations apply to the Wood Mountain area. *See also* Ch. 6.

112 Macleod, op. cit., p. 46.

113 NWMP, *Report for 1902*, p. 79.

114 Hanson, op. cit., pp. 68-69.

115 NWMP, *Report for 1902*, p. 79 (also Commissioner Perry's remarks, p. 5).

116 Hanson, op. cit., p. 66 and distribution lists 1903-6. Hamiltons, op. cit., p. 259 notes this was partly due to the vocal demands of local ranchers.

117 Macleod, op. cit., pp. 108 and 149-50; special constables were civilians used for camp work, scouting, cooking, etc. Use of these assistants at Wood Mountain started as early as 1899.

118 NWMP, *Report for 1903*, p. 101 and *Report for 1904*, p. 14; *see also* Hamiltons, op. cit., regarding the gang's activities at this time. The police's problem was complicated by local rumours and exaggeration.

119 NWMP, *Report for 1905*, p. 73 and Hanson, op. cit., pp. 70-71 for summaries of the case. Hamiltons, op. cit., pp. 242-47 has a long account of the trial. Unfortunately for Shufelt, the men his colleagues and the task of intimidating were tough old pioneers like Sam Briggs and Pascal Bonneau.

120 G. Douglas, "Wood Mountain Tales," p. 16, SHS 18 (4), Archives of Saskatchewan, Regina, Sask.

121 NWMP, *Report for 1906*, p. 41.

122 NWMP, *Report for 1908*, p. 25. *See also* Hamiltons, op. cit., p. 70 regarding the untimely ends met by several gang members.

123 NWMP, *Report for 1904*, p. 75; *Report for 1905*, p. 77; and *Report for 1906*, p. 33.

124 NWMP, *Report for 1906*, p. 33.

125 NWMP, *Report for 1914*, p. 46 and *Report for 1908*, p. 33.

126 NWMP, *Report for 1913*, p. 187; Wood Mountain was the last post in Saskatchewan at which the police acted as customs officers.

127 For example, the last of the outposts (Pinto Butte) was closed by 1909 (Hanson, op. cit., p. 66).

128 NWMP, *Report for 1916*, p. 49.

129 Ibid, p. 291; *Report for 1917*, p. 9; *Report for 1918*, p. 8; *Report for 1919*, p. 7; and Macleod, op. cit., p. 70.

Chapter IV Time of Troubles: The Sioux at Wood Mountain, 1876-81

1 P.S. Sharp, *Whoop-Up Country* (Minneapolis, Minn.: 1955), p. 247.

2 *Note on Sources*, below.

3 G. Laviolette, *Sioux Indians in Canada* (Regina: 1944), p. 74.

4 G. MacEwan, Sitting Bull (Edmonton: 1973), p. 17.

5 Ibid, pp. 12-13 and 35; J.P. Turner, The North-West Mounted Police 1873 - 1893 (Ottawa: 1950), Vol. I p. 284 says he was born in South Dakota.

6 R.M. Utley, Frontier Regulars (New York: 1973), p. 236; "Blackfoot" were the Sihasapa council of the Tetons (Ch. 2).

7 As MacEwan, op. cit., p. 14 points out, his peaceful behavior in Canada was in the nature of a conditional truce rather than a cessation of hostilities. He "made displays of peaceful intent but never lost the conviction that there would be neither freedom nor justice for his people until the last white man was removed from Indian country."

8 Ibid, p. 46 and Utley, op. cit., pp. 134-35.

9 Utley, op. cit., pp. 134 and 237.

10 Ibid, p. 241.

11 J. Jennings, "The Plains Indian and the Law" in H.A. Dempsey, ed., Men in Scarlet (Calgary: 1974), pp. 45-47; this is the essence of R.C. Macleod's argument regarding the reasons for the relative effectiveness of the NWMP in Canada, The North-West Mounted Police and Law Enforcement, 1873 - 1905 (Toronto and Buffalo: 1976), pp. 4-5.

12 This made heavy escorts for the U.S. Boundary Commission surveyors necessary in 1873 - 1874 (Ch. 5).

13 Utley, op. cit., pp. 242-48 and Turner, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 290-92. The harsh winter of 1875-1876 was also a factor in Sioux recalcitrance, encouraging them to stay with the game rather than follow government orders and rely on uncertain government rations at the agencies.

14 Ibid, p. 259; most Sioux and Cheyenne.

15 Ibid, p. 262; see pp. 250-62 for a clear account of the campaign, with maps. The battle area is about 200 miles due south of the park area, on the Yellowstone (Map I).

16 Ibid, p. 279.

17 Laviolette, op. cit., pp. 64 and 83 and MacEwan, op. cit., p. 35.

18 MacEwan, op. cit., pp. 86-87; from the Walsh Papers (PAM).

19 NWMP, Report for 1877, p. 33 (Letter of May 23, 1877; Irvine to Secretary of State).

20 R.C. Macleod, "Canadianizing the West: The North-West Mounted Police as Agents of the National Policy, 1873 - 1905" in L.H. Thomas, ed., Essays on Western History (Edmonton: 1976), p. 103.

21 Macleod, NWMP, i.

22 Ibid, pp. 4-5; notes that the NWMP powers were a 'radical departure' from the British tradition of local authority over law enforcement - such as was followed in the U.S.

23 Jennings, op. cit., p. 63.

24 Laviolette, op. cit., p. 96 and Turner, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 407.

25 NWMP, Report for 1877, pp. 47-52 - a transcript of the meeting and Macleod's covering letter, and MacEwan, op. cit., pp. 124-35; see also G. Pennanen, "Sitting Bull, Indian Without a Country" Canadian Historical Review, Vol. 51, No. 2 (June, 1970), pp. 128-29 on contemporary U.S. attitudes. The Sioux position was hardened by the recent arrival of 200 refugee Nez Perce in battered condition (MacEwan, op. cit., pp. 116-23), and by the selection of Gen. Terry, their recent adversary, as a member of the commission.

26 Pennanen, op. cit., p. 130 (and p. 127 regarding 1877); MacEwan, op. cit., pp. 108-9 who cites a private letter to the Governor General from Wendell Phillips of Boston, opposing extradition.

27 Utley, op. cit., p. 286 and MacEwan, op. cit., p. 104.

28 C.M. MacInnes, quoted by F.G. Roe, *The North American Buffalo* (Toronto: 1972), p. 477; *see* pp. 810-11 for an examination of the evidence on this question.

29 MacEwan, op. cit., p. 154 notes that almost everyone involved was blamed by someone at some time or other.

30 Dewdney's 1879 Annual Report, quoted by MacEwan, op. cit., p. 155 (italics added); Qu'Appelle is at about 50° 20° N. Lat.

31 Z.M. Hamilton, "Wood Mountain, its story and its people," p. 36, SHS 234, Archives of Saskatchewan, Regina, Saskatchewan, who cites Legare as his source.

32 MacEwan, op. cit., pp. 148-49 and G. Douglas ("Avalon"), "'Buffalo' Allen" *Scarlet and Gold*, Vol. 13 (1932), pp. 68-69.

33 David "Peaches" Davis, "Trading with the Indians at Wood Mountain" *Scarlet and Gold*, Vol. 16 (1935), pp. 59-60, and Rondeau and Chabot, op. cit., pp. 76-77.

34 Utley, op. cit., p. 287 and Rondeau and Chabot, op. cit., p. 96; Sitting Bull commanded the rear guard (MacEwan, op. cit., p. 272).

35 Quoted by Turner, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 274.

36 *See* Pennanen, op. cit., pp. 133-34 on diplomacy and Turner, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 265-67 for an account of Walsh's meeting with Miles. MacEwan, op. cit., p. 164 notes that none of the Sioux accompanying Sitting Bull into the U.S. took part in any hostile acts. Miles tacitly admitted this to Walsh.

37 Quoted by Macleod, *NWMP*, p. 30.

38 Ibid., p. 31.

39 NWMP, *Report for 1880*, pp. 26-28 (Walsh); comments for Feb. 1, 4, and 24 and May 10. At least 200 lodges had left by the latter date. On April 1, Sitting Bull reportedly gave permission for any of his followers who wanted to do so to leave (p. 28). Walsh gave up his command on July 15.

40 NWMP, *Report for 1879*, p. 16 (Walsh).

41 NWMP, *Report for 1880*, p. 26 (Walsh) and p. 27 for the following. Hamiltons, op. cit., p. 32 notes that at this time J.L. Legare had a storeroom full of muskets, rifles and pistols of all kinds which the Sioux had traded for food. Mrs. Hamilton believed that "he was encouraged in this trade by the Mounted Police officers," for obvious reasons.

42 Ibid, p. 32 (Crozier).

43 Ibid, pp. 32-33.

44 MacEwan, op. cit., p. 183 and Pennanen, op. cit., pp. 137-38.

45 Pennanen, op. cit., p. 138; U.S. newspapers inflated the figure to 400 lodges, for some reason.

46 Ibid, p. 138.

47 Ibid, p. 139.

48 MacEwan, op. cit., p. 199; Turner, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 571-72 says it was 30.

49 Turner, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 572-74.

50 Ibid, pp. 579-87 for a full description; also MacEwan, op. cit., 190-93.

51 MacEwan, op. cit., p. 197 and Rondeau and Chabot, op. cit., p. 242. Chabot says that a general reward of $25,000 had been set for Sitting Bull's return, and that $6000 was paid to Legare at the time. Neither figure appears elsewhere in the literature on the subject.

52 Rondeau and Chabot, op. cit., p. 243 and MacEwan, op. cit., p. 198 (the list is reproduced in full on p. 199).

53 Ibid.

54 Quoted by Hamiltons, op. cit., p. 35. If this is true, he soon changed his mind (Ch. 2). Correspondence regarding Legare's Candian land claims (1881-1904) is in Dept. of Interior, Dominion Lands Survey file No. 49185 at the Archives of Saskatchewan, Regina, Sask.

55 Ibid, p. 36, note 1, and MacEwan, op. cit., p. 198.

56 MacEwan, op. cit., p. 200.

57 Rondeau and Chabot, op. cit., p. 244; Rondeau's, the earlier version (p. 99) says it was $8000.

58 Ch. 3 and Turner, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 650 and 660-61.

59 Laviolette, op. cit., p. 119 says 150 lodges, but this is certainly too high. Rondeau and Chabot, op. cit., p. 238 put the total at 20 lodges.

60 Ibid, p. 120; NWMP Report for 1884, p. 141; and Hamiltons, op. cit., p. 37.

61 Ibid, pp. 111-14; these were asigned in 1873-1978. White Eagle was on the Oak River Reserve (No. 58), near Griswold, Manitoba.

62 MacEwan, op. cit., p. 201.

63 NWMP, Report for 1885, p. 63.

64 For example, NWMP, Report for 1886, p. 87; Report for 1887, p. 111; and Report for 1888, p. 98.

65 NWMP, Report for 1894, p. 87.

66 NWMP, Report for 1892, p. 50. See also B.B. Peel, "R.M. 45" Vol. I, p. 33 regarding antelope. The police concern at this time may also have been due to the participation of local Sioux in the Messiah Craze of 1890-91; Laviolette, op. cit., p. 119.

67 NWMP, Report for 1894, p. 52.

68 Laviolette, op. cit., p. 111.

69 NWMP, Report for 1912, p. 163; Laviolette, op. cit., p. 120 says 1913.

70 NWMP, Report for 1916, p. 32.

71 Laviolette, op. cit., p. 120; Order in Council No. 1775, August 5, 1930.

72 Wood Mountain Historical Society, They Came to Wood Mountain (hereafter cited as WMHS Wood Mountain) (Wood Mountain, Saskatchewan: 1969), pp. 21-22 and Laviolette, op. cit., p. 120.

Chapter V The Way West: Exploration and Survey, 1853-83

1 J.G. Nelson, The Last Refuge (Montreal: 1973), p. 19.

2 J. Warkentin, "Steppe, Desert and Empire" (hereafter cited as Warkentin, "Steppe") in A.W. Rasporich and H.C. Klassen, eds., Prairie Perspectives Vol. 2 (Toronto: 1973), pp. 103-6.

3 Ibid., pp. 106-8 and 111.

4 Ibid, pp. 106-8.

5 I. Spry, ed. and intro., The Papers of the Palliser Expedition (Toronto: 1968), p. cix regarding contemporary usage.

6 Quoted in J. Warkentin, The Western Interior of Canada, A Record of Geographical Discovery 1612-1917 (hereafter cited as Warkentin, Interior) (Toronto: 1964), pp. 151-52; from the Stevens report of 1855.

7 Warkentin, "Steppe," pp. 112-13.

8 Spry, op. cit., p. 421; this trip was led by Hector in 1859.

9 Ibid, p. 9 (General Report, 1862); roughly the area with apexes at Turtle Mountain and the Rockies on the 49th Parallel, and at the Elbow of the South Saskatchewan.

10 Ibid, p. 255 (Journal, July 24).

11 Ibid, p. 538 (Letter of July 8, 1860 to the Secretary of State for the Colonies).

12 Quoted by Warkentin, "Steppe," p. 117.

13 Quoted by Warkentin, Interior, pp. 170-71; also pp. 166-67 on climate. The above is taken from various scientific papers delivered in 1861.

14 H.Y Hind, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 350-51.

15 Spry, op. cit., p. 146; the effects of the bison on the grasslands in the late 1850s such as those noted here, may have contributed to Palliser's and Hind's low opinion of the fertility of the area; Nelson, op. cit., p. 143.

16 For example, Spry, op. cit., p. 18.

17 Ibid, cxii-cxiii; see Chs. 7 and 9 below regarding dryland farming techniques.

18 Ibid, p. cxii.

19 Warkentin, "Steppe," p. 121.

20 R. Bell, "Report on the Country between Red River and the South Saskatchewan, etc.," (Ottawa: Canadian Geological Survey, 1873-74), pp. 78-80. Also B. Rose, Wood Mountain-Willow Bunch Coal Area, Saskatchewan (Ottawa: Canadian Geological Survey Memoir No. 89, 1916), pp. 5 and 9 on Bell's trip.

21 See J.E. Parsons, op. cit., Ch. 1 for details. The commission was a by-product of the Washington Conference of 1871. Parsons has an excellent bibliographical essay covering British and American Boundary Commission reports and publications.

22 Ibid, p. xi.

23 Ibid, p. 77; enclosed map shows westerly mileages.

24 Ibid, p. 80. Gregory had earlier met a Wood Mountain Métis cart train (p. 77). Why Anderson did not go directly to Wood Mountain is a mystery. It may be that he did not know its exact position relative to the border.

25 Ibid, p. 96; a photo in the Glenbow Photo Archives (NA 354-9) is probably of the original commission building at Wood Mountain. See Appendix D regarding Boundary Commission photographs.

26 Ibid, pp. 97-99.

27 A. Campbell and W.J. Twining, Report upon the Survey of the Boundary (Washington, D.C.: 1878), pp. 279-80 (Gregory), and Parsons, op. cit., pp. 97 and 100.

28 Ibid, pp. 62 (Twining) and 280-81 (Gregory); see also the drawing of the badlands after p. 280.

29 Parsons, op. cit., p. 126; also pp. 101-7 describing the summer work.

30 Ibid, p. 126; the police also bought 129 horses and oxen from the commission later, at Dufferin.

31 Quoted by Parsons, op. cit., p. 105; Featherstonhaugh met Assiniboines near Cottonwood Coulee in the southwestern corner of the park area.

32 L.S. Russell, Dinosaur Hunting in Western Canada (Toronto: 1966), pp. 4-5 a short biography. Dawson was born in Nova Scotia and educated at McGill and London. Dawson's physical handicaps (he was a hunchback) make his achievements all the more impressive.

33 Campbell and Twining, op. cit., p. 62 (Twining).

34 NWMP, Report for 1874, Diary Aug. 13, 1874; near Old Wives Lake.

35 G.M. Dawson, Report on the Geology and Resources of the Region in the Vicinity of the Forty-Ninth Parallel (Montreal: 1875), p. 293.

36 Ibid, pp. 293-94.

37 Ibid, p. 294; comments on cattle in the area (p. 302 and Ch. 6 below).

38 Ibid, p. 294.

39 Hind, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 318, is the only reference to Wood Mountain in either of the reports. Wood Mountain did not appear on maps until the 1870s.

40 Dawson, op. cit., p. 296.

41 Ibid, p. 294.

42 Ibid, p. 299 (italics added); the "limited area" refers to the Rock Creek badlands; description of badlands (p. 103). Dawson found the first dinosaur fossils in Canada here (p. 105 and Russell, op. cit., p. 4ff.).

43 S. Fleming, Report on Surveys and Preliminary Operations ... (Ottawa: 1877), p. 324 and Warkentin, "Steppe." p. 124.

44 C.S.P. 44 Vic. (1881) No. 3, Pt. I, p. vii (Annual Report of the Dept. of Interior for 1880), Macoun himself argued that the myth of aridity was perpetuated by writers "whose views have been based on a misinterpretation of Capt. Palliser's remarks;" J.M. Macoun, Manitoba and the Great North-West (Guelph, Ont.: 1882), p. 142.

45 Macoun, op. cit., pp. 63-64; compare his text with that of Dawson, op. cit., pp. 293-94.

46 Ibid, p. 263; Macoun cites Dawson regarding cattle roaming loose at Wood Mountain in 1874 (see Ch. 6, below).

47 The argument is fully laid out in Macoun, op. cit., pp. 269-72. Walsh does not mention either Macoun or Begg.

48 NWMP, Report for 1880, p. 26 (Walsh). The year before the police had successfully planted a garden at the post, which may account for Walsh's enthusiasm for farming (Ch. 3). As for the accuracy of the first set of comments, see Ch. 6, especially for the winter of 1906-7.

49 W.F. King and J.S. Dennis, "General Report of Operations from 1869 to 1889," C.S.P. 55 Vic. (1892) No. 13 Pt. VI, Department of Interior, Topographic Surveys Branch, p. 31.

50 H.D. Kemp, "The Department of the Interior in the West, 1873-1883" (M.A. thesis, University of Manitoba, 1950), Ch. 3, especially pp. 51-55.

51 King and Dennis, op. cit., pp. 56-70 for a detailed list of all "surveyors employed and work accomplished" during the field seasons involved, and pp. 21-24 for an administrative summary. The originals of the surveyors reports are on file at the Archives of Saskatchewan, Regina, as are the individual township maps compiled later.

52 The map appended to R.G. McConnell, "Report on the Cypress Hills, Wood Mountain, and adjacent country" (Ottawa: Canadian Geological Survey, 1886), shows the survey work completed by 1884-85 - a complete grid of township outlines. Since it has all of the terrain details sketched in by the surveyors, it is the first detailed and accurate map of the park area.
53 O.J. Klotz, "Report of O.J. Klotz, D.L.S.," C.S.P. 47 Vic. (1884) No. 12, pp. 88-89; ranges 1, 4 and 10.
54 Ibid, pp. 89-90.
55 Ibid; ranges 4, 5, 6, 7 and 10.
56 Ibid, p. 89. G.M. Dawson, writing for the Montreal Gazette in 1881, made the same point. He noted that "The very dryness of the climate which causes [nutritous] grasses to be produced ... renders agriculture precarious or impossible except where irrigation can be resorted to with facility" (Quoted in L.G. Thomas, ed., The Prairie West to 1905, p. 229). It seems that he was beginning to understand some of the problems with agriculture in the southwest by this time.
57 B.B. Peel, "R.M. 45," Vol. I, p. 98.
58 Warkentin, "Steppe," p. 125.
59 Klotz, op. cit., p. 90.
60 Warkentin, "Steppe," p. 128.
61 McConnell, op. cit., and Rose, op. cit.

Chapter VI The Ranching Frontier

1 D.C. McGowan, Grassland Settlers (Regina: 1975), pp. 4-5 and H. Otterson, "The Southwest Saskatchewan Range Industry" Canadian Cattlemen, Vol. 1, No. 2 (September, 1938), p. 91.
2 P.S Long, The Great Canadian Range (Toronto: 1963), p. 4 and B.B. Peel, "R.M. 45" (M.A. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1946), Vol. I, p. 29.
3 C. Martin, "Dominion Lands" Policy, edited by L.H. Thomas (Toronto: 1973), p. 181.
4 Peel, op. cit., p. 78; cattle were stampeded from Ft. Buford by the Sioux and found their way to Wood Mountain. Peel does not give his source.
5 G.M. Dawson, Report on the Geology and Resources in the Vicinity of the Forty-Ninth Parallel (Montreal: 1875), p. 303. L.W. Herchmer also saw these in 1874-75 while with the Boundary Commission; NWMP, Report for 1886, p. 17.
6 P.S. Sharp, Whoop-Up Country (Minneapolis, Minn.: 1955), pp. 232-35.
7 G.M. Dawson, op. cit., p. 302.
8 NWMP, Report for 1877 and Report for 1880, Wood Mountain.
9 Rondeau and Chabot, op. cit., p. 150. The Virden-Oak Lake area was the eastern terminus of the old Traders' Road to Wood Mountain.
10 Ibid, p. 118.
11 Ibid, p. 150; this had failed by 1892. Rondeau says they leased 36 townships, but 36 sections is more likely.
12 Quoted by A.S. Morton, History of Prairie Settlement (Toronto: 1938), p. 143.

13 NWMP, Report for 1886, p. 17 (Herchmer); the comments are based on his experience in 1874-75. Peel, op. cit., is incorrect in calling the dates given in the report a misprint.

14 Otterson, "The Southwestern Saskatchewan Range Industry," (hereafter cited as "Range Industry"), p. 91 and VMHS, Val-Echo (Val Marie, Sask.: 1955), p. 12.

15 Peel, op. cit., p. 81.

16 WMHS, (Wood Mountain, Sask.: 1969), p. 23; the N-N was one of the biggest U.S. cattle companies, having 200,000 head in 1888. W. Ogle, "Ogle Reminiscences," p. 5, II. A. 16, Archives of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Sask., ca. 1945.

17 NWMP, Report for 1887, pp. 88-89 and WHMS, Wood Mountain, p. 23.

18 NWMP, Report for 1888, p. 112.

19 NWMP, Report for 1889, p. 98 and WMHS, Wood Mountain, p. 23.

20 G. Douglas, "Wood Mountain Tales," pp. 24-25, SHS 18 (4), Archives of Saskatchewan, Regina, Sask., and Ogle, op. cit., pp. 5-7.

21 Peel, op. cit., p. 81.

22 D.H. Breen, "The Mounted Police and the Ranching Frontier" in H.A. Dempsey, ed., Men in Scarlet (Calgary: 1974), p. 116.

23 Rusticus (pseud.) "Wood Mountain," p. 11. BP482 Archives of Saskatchewan, Regina, Sask., 1927.

24 Douglas, "Wood Mountain Tales," pp. 15 and 24 and WMHS, Wood Mountain, p. 24; few of the dates given in the local histories are reliable in this period. Allen still had his store as late as 1895 (NWMP, Report for 1895, p. 88).

25 Ogle, op. cit., pp. 1 and 5, and WMHS, Wood Mountain, p. 29; Douglas, "Wood Mountain Tales," p. 24 indicates that Brown was later in a partnership with J. Thomson. (see below).

26 Ibid, p. 1 and Douglas, "Wood Mountain Tales," p. 18.

27 NWMP, Report for 1889, p. 98; the rancher at Old Wives Lake was Fred Bevitt (Douglas, "Wood Mountain Tales," p. 15 and Rusticus, op. cit., p. 12).

28 Z.M. Hamilton, op. cit., p. 62, and Rondeau and Chabot, op. cit., p. 118; his sons were Pascal Jr. and Treffle Bonneau.

29 Also regularly spelled Thompson. I have used the short form here to avoid confusion with the Thompson brothers, who later moved in at Elm Springs.

30 WMHS, Wood Mountain, p. 29 and Douglas, "Wood Mountain Tales," p 19.

31 Ibid, pp. 24, 29 and 44; Mayne left for the Yukon in 1895, but returned to Wood Mountain about 1900, after leaving the NWMP.

32 Ogle, op. cit., p. 8; NWMP, Report for 1892, p. 82 (about 50 mares). Despite Ogle's low opinion, Thomson continued to ranch at least until 1898. See Archives of Saskatchewan, "Early Brands in the Wood Mountain area, compiled from the Dept. of Agriculture Brand Books Nos. A.B.C.D.E.F.J.," Book B, No. 1225, Clippings File, Archives of Saskatchewan,
Regina, Sask. (cited hereafter as AOSR, "Brands").

33 NWMP, Report for 1892, 82.

34 AOSR, "Brands," No. 1229 and Rusticus, op. cit., p. 12 Rowley had served from 1886 to 1890, and located near the present site of Assiniboia.

35 NWMP, Report for 1892, p. 82. Rusticus, op. cit., p. 12 says 'James and Joseph', but may have confused them with Jimmy Thomson.

According to AOSR, "Brands," A No. 132, the 'S-S' brand was issued to R. Thompson in Moose Jaw in 1893 for use at Wood Mountain. The alternate spellings of Raffelshay are from the police report and WHMS, *Wood Mountain*, p. 23.

36 AOSR, "Brands," A Nos 136 and 137, and Hamilton, "Wood Mountain," p. 67.

37 NWMP, *Report for 1895*, p. 88.

38 Peel, op. cit., p. 82.

39 Rondeau and Chabot, op. cit., pp. 150-51. A large horse herd was brought in from Montana; Ogle, op. cit., p. 2.

40 Ibid, p. 151.

41 Douglas, "Wood Mountain Tales," p. 17.

42 Ogle, op. cit., p. 1.

43 Ibid, p. 8.

44 Ibid, pp. 8-9 regarding his settling at Wood Mountain (WHMS, *Wood Mountain*, pp. 32-34 is a shortened version). This account is very entertaining, but the chronology is garbled. The notes by G. Shepherd (edited by R. De Cock), "'Lord' Ogle of Wood Mountain," p. 3 II. A. 44, Shepherd Notes, Archives of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Sask., clarifies things considerably, and appears to be accurate. Douglas, "Wood Mountain Tales," p. 17 does not add much to either. The short biography given above is probably correct in the sequence of events given, but some of the dates are conjectural.

45 NWMP, *Report for 1899*, p. 49.

46 AOSR, "Brands," A-D; note especially F No. 970; Rusticus, op. cit., p. 12.

47 NWMP, *Report for 1899*, p. 65.

48 NWMP, *Report for 1888*, p. 115; *1889*, p. 98; *1892*, p. 80; *1894*, p. 88; *1896*, p. 65 all record fires which burnt over the whole of the district. *See* Douglas, "Wood Mountain Tales," p. 15 for a firsthand account of the local "fire brigade" organized by the police to combat prairie fires in the vicinity of the post (by Mrs. Allen).

49 *See* Ch. 3 above, on police efforts to combat this; *Report for 1893*, p. 52 and *Report for 1894*, p. 87 record the worst of such outbreaks. As Breen, "Frontier," pp. 123-24 notes, this drifting was not always accidental. He also discusses the problems which it entailed along the border as a whole.

50 Douglas, "Wood Mountain Tales," p. 17.

51 The best summaries of the complex history of Dominion grazing lease development are Martin, op. cit., pp. 178-79 and the articles by J. Proskie "Trends in Security of Tenure of Grazing Lands in Western Canada" *Canadian Cattlemen*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (June 1939), pp. 200-17 and D.H. Breen, "The Ranching Frontier in Canada, 1875-1905" in L.G. Thomas, ed., *The Prairie West to 1905* (Toronto: 1975), pp. 217-27 (cited hereafter as Breen, "1905"). Breen's doctoral dissertation "The Canadian West and the Ranching Frontier, 1878-1921" (Univ. of Alberta, 1972) is the latest and most complete treatment of the subject.

52 C.S.P. 3-4 Ed. VII (1904), No. 25, Dept. of Interior, Dominion Lands Branch, p. 110; also 6720 sheep. No references to sheep in the Wood Mountain district came to light during the research for this study.

53 C.S.P. 3-4 Ed. VII (1904), No. 25, Dept. of Interior, Timber and Grazing Lands Branch, pp. 64-77 (list of leases).

54 As local histories attest; *see* the comments on leases in Rusticus, op. cit., p. 13 and WMHS, *Wood Mountain*, p. 100. Peel, op. cit., p. 88 calls this "the paradox of the ranching period" in the district.

55 Quoted by Proskie, op. cit., p. 201.

56 C.W. Vrooman et al, *Cattle Ranching in Western Canada* (Ottawa: 1946), p. 15.

57 A.A. Lupton, "Cattle Ranching in Alberta, 1874-1910" *Albertan Geographer*, Vol. 3 (1966-67), pp. 54-57 and A.S. Morton, op. cit., pp. 137-38. Breen, "1905," p. 126 discusses the advent of dryland farming in Alberta and the declining political power of the ranchers.

58 Otterson, "Range Industry," p. 91; North-West Territories, Dept. of Agriculture, *Report for 1902*, p. 52; Hamiltons, op. cit., p. 241.

59 Rondeau and Chabot, op. cit., 118 and Hamiltons, op. cit., p. 66.

60 Peel, op. cit., p. 88; an estimate.

61 NWMP, *Report for 1900*, p. 47; AOSR, "Brands," F and J.

62 WMHS, *Wood Mountain*, pp. 41-42.

63 Ibid, pp. 93-94.

64 For examples, Hamiltons, op. cit., p. 96 and NWMP, *Report for 1893*, p. 52 (N-N and Circle Diamond).

65 VMHS, *Val-Echo*, p. 10; G. Douglas, "The Turkey Track Ranch and Tony Day" (hereafter cited as Douglas, "Turkey Track"), pp. 1-2, SHS 18 (3), Archives of Saskatchewan, Regina, Sask.; and H. Otterson, "The White Mud River Range Thirty Years Ago" (hereafter cited as Otterson, "Thirty Years"), pp. 14 and 21, Pamphlet File, Archives of Saskatchewan, Regina, Sask. It is probable that the large ranch being established at Seventy Mile, which is mentioned in the NWMP, *Report for 1902*, p. 77, was the Turkey Track line camp noted above. McGowan, op. cit., p. 87 indicates that at least part of the Turkey Track range was leased, but this does not appear to have been the case for the Wood Mountain operation.

66 NWMP, *Report for 1899*, p. 54 and Hamiltons, op. cit., p. 96.

67 Otterson, "Thirty Years," pp. 14 and 21; VMHS, *Val-Echo*, p. 10; and W. Stegner, *Wolf Willow* (New York: 1966), p. 134, who comments on the American orientation of the "cattle culture" on the Frenchman.

68 Ibid, p. 21.

69 Ibid, p. 15.

70 Ibid, pp. 15-19; this lists the ranches in order, from Eastend to Seventy Mile.

71 Ibid, p. 19.

72 My estimate; *see* above for 1900 totals and Otterson, "Thirty Years," 21 for 1906. This allows for about 10,000 head on all the small ranches put together, and 30-40,000 on the large ones (Z-X & "76" herds and U.S. strays not included).

73 McGowan, op. cit., p. 89 gives some relevant export figures for Maple Creek-Swift Current; Otterson, "Thirty Years" p. 21 notes that some local cattle were being exported through Montana.

74 North-West Territories, Dept. of Agriculture, *Report for 1899*, p. 52; *1901*, p. 74; *1902*, p. 52; and *1903*, p. 46. All figures are for the Wood Mountain District, but boundaries are not given for this unit.

75 NWMP, Report for 1904, p. 70.

76 Peel, op. cit., p. 89; McGowan, op. cit., p. 88.

77 There had also been severe fires in the summer of 1902, but sufficient feed was saved on the Canadian side, and the ensuing winter was mild; NWMP, Report for 1902, p. 76.

78 Hamiltons, op. cit., p. 241 regarding Bonneau's losses in 1903-4 and 1906-7.

79 Report for 1903, p. 8.

80 NWMP, Report for 1904, p. 75; a veterinarian was permanently stationed at the post from 1902 on.

81 For livestock entered at Wood Mountain see NWMP, Report for 1904, p. 75, (907 horses /9 cattle); 1905, p. 77 (1080/162); and 1906, p. 33 (2253/112).

82 Comments in the literature on the park area - including both local and general histories - about leases before 1907 are uniformly in the negative. The only ones definitely known to have been taken out before 1907 are Ogle's small one (above, n. 53), and a 7992-acre lease taken out in 1903 by one Albert L. Smith near the present site of Monchy (1-14 W3). This could have been related to the T-Bar Down operation. It is recorded in a list of Dominion grazing leases on file at the Archives of Saskatchewan in Regina (Sask. Dept. of Agriculture, Deputy Minister's Records XVII, No. 9 "A list of ranching leases granted and cancelled during the period 1900-1930, approximately": cited hereafter as AOSR, "Ranching Leases"). It is nor clear whether all or only some of those listed were cancelled, nor if all the leases in the area (the western half of the park area) are given. If a complete list does exist, it will be in the Dept. of the Interior records at the Public Archives in Ottawa (Note on Sources, below).

83 Lupton, op. cit., p. 57.

84 NWMP, Report for 1906, p. 33.

85 Martin, op. cit., p. 179; at the same time, it was decided that grazing leases would be allowed only in the region south of tp. 29 in Alberta (around Drumheller) and certain corresponding areas in Saskatchewan (south of Moose Jaw, tp. 17; see Peel, op. cit., p. 98). It should be noted that "closed" leases were for special cases, and that "open" ones remained the most common. McGowan, op. cit., p. 91 notes that closed leases were never issued "to anything like the degree justified" by the actual character of the land in the southwest.

86 McGowan, op. cit., p. 89 and Stegner, op. cit., p. 139. Wallace Stegner's powerful description of the winter of 1906- 7 along the Frenchman (pt. 3, Chs. 2 and 3) consists of two semi-fictional accounts from the point of view of a young English cowboy and an American rancher's wife. They are highly accurate in detail, and much closer to the spirit of the event than any dry historical account can ever hope to be.

87 See Otterson, "Thirty Years," pp. 20-21 for the best general estimate of numbers, and Peel, op. cit., p. 90 for the Turkey Track. VMHS, Val-Echo, p. 10 says that the T-Bar Down had only 3000 head in the fall, but this is probably too low. Since Otterson was the manager of this outfit at this time, his estimate should be accepted. On the other hand, it is worth remembering that all of the totals for the large ranches are based on "book

count." Since it was impossible to count every head every year, herd totals were estimated by applying approximate annual birth and mortality rates to the original, known size of the herd. The drawbacks of this method are readily apparent.

88 Quoted by Stegner, op. cit., p. 139. It was the same all over the southwest; McGowan, op. cit., p. 104.

89 Peel, op. cit., p. 90.

90 Stegner, op. cit., p. 221.

91 Ibid, p. 221 and McGowan, op. cit., p. 105.

92 Otterson, "Thirty Years." p. 30.

93 Stegner, op. cit., p. 226.

94 Douglas, "Turkey Track" p. 2.

95 Otterson, "Thirty Years," pp. 35-38 and Peel, op. cit., p. 90. Douglas, "Turkey Track," p. 2 says the ranch recovered a total of 4000 head out of 23-25,000 on the range.

96 McGowan, op. cit., p. 105 and Otterson, "Range Industry," p. 91.

97 Ibid, p. 105.

98 WMHS, Wood Mountain, p. 41 and VMHS, Val-Echo, p. 10.

99 Otterson, "Thirty Years," p. 30 notes that such a move was planned by several outfits in 1907. He believed that "the entire country from Wood Mountain to the Alberta line would have been leased in the season of 1907 but for the great die off."

100 Ibid, p. 30 and McGowan, op. cit., p. 105.

101 For example, WMHS, Wood Mountain, pp. 41 and 96.

102 Otterson, "Thirty Years," p. 38.

103 Hamiltons, op. cit., p. 241.

104 Revised Statutes of Canada 7-8 Ed. VII (1908) ca. 20, assented to July 1908; amended by 6 Ed. VII (1906) ca. 55.

105 In fact, herd laws could be put into effect even before municipal incorporation, through the formation of a Herd District. The first of these appeared in the northern sector of the park area in 1908, and they quickly spread south (Sask. Dept. of Agriculture Report for 1908, p. 9 and Report for 1909, p. 9 etc., and Peel op. cit., p. 136.

106 Otterson, "Range Industry," p. 91, VMHS, Val-Echo, p. 15; and D.H. Breen, "The Turner Thesis and the Canadian West; A Closer Look at the Ranching Frontier" in L.H. Thomas, ed., Essays on Western History (Edmonton: 1976), p. 156, note 49.

107 VMHS, Val-Echo, p. 10 and Douglas, "Turkey Track," p. 2. Some local histories confuse the first sale with the second. The new 1907 owners were Simpson, Cruickshanks and Thatcher brothers; the 1910 ones, Gordon, Ironsides and Fares.

108 Ibid, p. 11 and Otterson, "Thirty Years," p. 39.

109 Ibid, p. 12 and McGowan, op. cit., p. 77. McGowan deals at length with the previous history of the "76" (Ch. 5 pp. 57-78). Originally an American ranch, it had moved to southwestern Saskatchewan in 1884, and in 1888 was bought by a British company headed by Sir John Lister Kaye. In 1895 the ranch was taken over by the Canadian Land and Ranch Co. and was run successfully until 1907.

110 Ibid, p. 10 and AOSR, "Ranching Leases," give the name of the lessee, acreage, dates and numbers of cattle and horses which had to be grazed. Unfortunately, exact land locations are not given, and most ranchers probably ran more stock than that listed. Huff's

lease was probably in the large block northwest of Val Marie shown on the Dept. of the Interior, Dominion Lands Branch, "Map Shewing Disposition of Lands - to January 1, 1913" (Ottawa: 1913).

111 Ibid, pp. 11-13 and AOSR, "Ranching Leases."

112 Ibid, and AOSR, "Ranching Leases." The map in VMHS, Val-Echo, p. 8 is a composite of pre- and post-1907 features, but the small ranch locations seem to be accurate (Map 10).

113 Long, op. cit., pp. 121 and 125 and AOSR, "Ranching Leases"; Buzzard took on out in 1913 (2881 ac.) and another in 1916 (2560 ac.). They were probably on the border just east of the Frenchman. Note that his lease requirement was for only 100 cattle.

114 Otterson, "Thirty Years," p. 15.

115 C.F. Miles, "Report of C.F. Miles, DSL, for 1908," C.S.P. 9-10 Ed. VII (1910), No. 25b, p. 154.

116 Otterson, "Thirty Years," 15; also G.C. Cowper, "General Report for 1917," p. 8. Dept. of Interior, Dominion Land Survey File, No. 130, Archives of Saskatchewan, Regina.

117 Long, op. cit., p. 4 and 65, and his comments on large-small rancher relationships on p. 59; VMHS, Val-Echo, p. 12 and AOSR, "Ranching Leases," No. 7937 (79893 ac.).

118 Ibid, p. 64.

119 VMHS, Val-Echo, pp. 16-23; many of the latter were Americans. The 1912 disposition map (n. 110, above) gives a very good idea of the spread of settlement at the time of the first flurry of leasing. There was a distinct pocket of homesteads around Seventy Mile Crossing by this time, with 'fronts' of settlement approaching from the west and northwest.

120 C.F. Miles, "Report for 1910," C.S.P.I Geo. V (1911), No. 25b, p. 104.

121 G.C. Cowper, op. cit., pp. 8-10.

122 Long, op. cit., p. 63.

123 Peel, op. cit., p. 92; and Shepherd, "Ogle", p. 236.

124 Peel, op. cit., p. 93, and C.F. Miles, "Report...for 1908," p. 154.

125 Douglas, "Wood Mountain Tales," p. 25.

126 WMHS, Wood Mountain, pp. 155-56.

127 Ibid, pp. 158-59.

128 Ibid, p. 162; the precise location could not be determined.

129 Ibid, p. 132; also p. 162. Whitetail was on the "Soo" Line built in 1901.

130 Douglas, "Wood Mountain Tales," p. 19.

131 WMHS, Wood Mountain, pp. 43-44 and Douglas, "Wood Mountain Tales," p. 17.

132 Douglas, "Wood Mountain Tales," p. 17; Ogle, op. cit., p. 9: and Shepherd, "Ogle," p. 2.

133 WMHS, Wood Mountain, p. 159; Richard De Cock was one of these.

134 Shepherd, "Ogle," p. 2.

135 Douglas, "Wood Mountain Tales," p. 19 (1919); actually, this event has even older antecedents, going back to the stampedes organized by the NWMP in the 1890s. See WMHS, Wood Mountain, p. 214.

136 Shepherd, "Ogle," p. 3. Ogle and Briggs were active Conservatives.

137 Dept. of Interior, Dominion Lands Branch, "Map Shewing Disposition of Lands - to Jan. 1, 1913."

138 WMHS, Wood Mountain, pp. 161-62.

139 NWMP, Report for 1915, p. 31.

140 Shepherd, "Ogle," p. 2.

141 Otterson, "Range Industry," p. 91; Sask. Dept. of Agriculture, Deputy Minister's Records XVII, No. 12, "Statement of Facts, etc.," p. 1, Archives of Saskatchewan, Regina, Sask. This 1921 submission by stock-growers notes that feeding costs in 1919-20 averaged 50% of the value of the animal, while prices dropped 30% in 1920, resulting in heavy losses for "every stockman in Western Canada."

142 Ogle, op. cit., p. 11; this document appears to be an unedited transcript of a dictated narrative.

143 Sask. Dept. of Agriculture, Report for 1909, p. 9.

144 Breen, "1905," p. 223.

145 Martin, op. cit., pp. 179-80; Report of the Ranching and Grazing Investigation Commission (Ottawa: Dept. of Interior, 1913). The date below refers to Order in Council, No. 296, Feb. 16, 1914.

146 The lack of information noted above (n. 82) makes it difficult to deal with this matter. An analysis of the AOSR, "Ranching Leases" list (which covers the west half of the park area only) seems to indicate that some ranchers took out new ten-year agreements for the same land held previously under 21-year leases (e.g. C.E. Prescott, Nos. 4155 and 7309), and others kept what was left of their 21-year lease as a ten-year closed lease (e.g. W. Huff, No. 4078); or simply kept their 21-year agreement (Vrooman, op. cit., p. 17). In any case, 95 ten-year leases of varying size are known to have been taken out in the western half of the area after 1914, as opposed to only 19 known 21-year leases before. The size restriction does not seem to have been uniformly followed. The Sand Lake Field, converted to a ten-year lease in 1917 was 79,893 acres (No. 7937). This may have been allowed as a special case. Overall, though, the trend was strongly towards small ten-year leases after 1914.

147 Martin, op. cit., p. 167; 13-14 Geo. V. (1923) ca. 44, revised in 1928.

148 Ibid, p. 167. (also Ch. 7, below).

149 Quoted by J.H. Archer, "The Saskatchewan Stock Growers' Association" Saskatchewan History, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Spring, 1960), p. 49.

150 Ibid, p. 43; according to J.G. MacCallum.

151 Quoted by Ibid, p. 43.

152 Ibid, pp. 44-49.

153 Some problems with herd laws continued due to the difficulties of keeping municipal councils in line; see, example, Sask. Dept. of Agriculture, Deputy Minister's Records XVII, No. 12 (S.S.G.A. 1915 - 1942), Letter of November 3, 1919 (H. McKellar to F.H. Auld), Archives of Saskatchewan, Regina, Sask.

154 Archer, op. cit., pp. 50-52.

155 Ibid, p. 57 and Vrooman, op. cit., p. 17. Agitation for renewal started much earlier. See "Statement of Facts, etc.," pp. 1-2 in Sask. Dept. of Agriculture, Deputy Minister's Records, XVII, No. 12, Archives of Saskatchewan, Regina, Sask. Ranchers' credit at the banks was adversely affected by the lack of tenure security, to note one problem involved.

156 AOSR, "Ranching Leases," No. 7937 and Long, op. cit., p. 1.

157 Long, op. cit., pp. 42 and 55.

158 Ibid, pp. 64-65.

159 Ibid, p. 65. T.B. Long came to Canada 1917. His son Phillip has written his biography (Seventy Years a Cowboy) as well as this personal history of the Seventy Mile Ranch. The lease included part of the proposed park (Core A; see map). The "76" brand was retained.

160 VMHS, Val-Echo, 8 (map), and Long, op. cit., p. 65.

161 Long, op. cit., pp. 66 and 80.

162 Ibid, p. 11; also p. 97 regarding gates and strays.

163 VMHS, Val-Echo, p. 28.

164 Long, op. cit., p. 111.

165 Otterson, "Range Industry," p. 91; also Vrooman, op. cit., p. 17. Long Ranch was not the only large ranch to fold in the early 1920s.

166 Long, op. cit., pp. 171 and 177.

167 Ibid, pp. 171-72.

168 Douglas, "Wood Mountain Tales," p. 25 (1932).

169 G. Shepherd, The West of Yesterday (Toronto: 1965), p. 91.

170 Archer, op. cit., p. 57.

171 Peel, op. cit., pp. 391-93 and A.R. Turner, "How Saskatchewan Dealt with her 'Dust Bowl'" Geographical Magazine, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Aug. 1955), p. 191. J.K. Wiens "An Economic Study of the Val Marie Irrigation Project" (M. Sc. thesis, University of Saskatchewan 1958), p. 14 describes the details of this program.

172 Vrooman, op. cit., p. 17.

173 Wiens, op. cit., pp. 28-31 and 53. See also Turner, op. cit., pp. 197-98 for an example. These two studies, the source of the above paragraph, provide thorough histories of the project and analyses of its effects. Wiens goes into considerable detail.

174 J.H. Gray, op. cit.; a full, readable description of P.F.R.A. activities in southwestern Saskatchewan, with frequent references to the park area. Also Turner, op. cit., p. 192, and Map 13.

175 VMHS, Val-Echo, p. 10, and above.

176 Joint Federal-Provincial Committee on the Proposed Grasslands National Park, A Proposed Grasslands National Park: What Would it Mean? (Ottawa: 1976), pp. 10-11, and Map 13.

177 Turner, op. cit., p. 188 and Wiens, op. cit., pp. 78-80.

178 S.R. Burkell, "Cattle production in western Saskatchewan and eastern Alberta" Economic Annalist, Vol. 23, No. 3 (June 1953), 68 (Census Division 3).

179 And continued as late as the 1950s; VMHS, Val-Echo, p. 34 regarding abandonments in the Masefield district in 1952 - 1953.

180 Peel, op. cit., p. 92; adjacent to the McEachern Community Pasture.

181 Vrooman, op. cit., pp. 19-22 and Burkell, op. cit., pp. 66-67; 76% of the land in census division 3 was natural pasture in 1951. The proportion is lower today, with the greater use of "exotic" grasses for improving pasture. See H. Tiessen, "Old-style Prairie ranching gives way to intensive crop-and-cattle farming" Canadian Geographical Journal, Vol. 88, No. 4 (April, 1974), p. 10 for recent developments in the park area.

182 Ibid, p. 34.

183 Breen, "1905," p. 227.

184 V.C. Fowke, *The National Policy and the Wheat Economy* (Toronto: 1957), p. 286.

Chapter VII The Dominion Lands Act of 1908

1 Quoted by J.W. Bennett, *Northern Plainsmen* (Chicago: 1969), p. 176.

2 See Chs. 8 and 9 below.

3 Breen, "1905," p. 226, and P.F. Sharp, "The American Farmer and the 'Last Best West'" *Agricultural History*, Vol. 21 (1947) pp. 65-66.

4 B.B. Peel, "R.M. 45," Vol. I, p. 98.

5 D.H. Breen, "The Canadian Prairie West and the 'Harmonious' Settlement Interpretation" *Agricultural History*, Vol. 47 (1973), pp. 72-74, and "Ranching Frontier," p. 225. *See also* Ch. 6, above.

6 Breen, "Ranching Frontier," p. 226; C. Martin, op. cit., p. 155; and W.S. Waddell, "The Honourable Frank Oliver" (M.A. thesis, Univ. of Alberta, 1950), p. 246. Oliver advocated "a land policy the basic idea of which is land for the settler."

7 Martin, op. cit., p. 178.

8 Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 1908 col. 11139 (Oliver) and col. 11154 (Borden); Thos. Greenway had led the opposition to the previous bills, but was absent during the 1908 debates. *Debates* are cited hereafter as *DHC* date; cols. 11141-11154 are from the June 23 session and cols. 11947-11958 from that of July 4 - the two sessions in which major discussions of the Bill took place.

9 Martin, op. cit., pp. 163-64.

10 *DHC* 1908, cols. 11140-42 (Oliver) and 11951-52 (Hughes).

11 Martin, op. cit., pp. 98-88 and pp. 162-63; also *DHC* 1908 cols. 11142 and 11152-53, where Oliver deals specifically with the question of government, (as opposed to corporate) disposal of the railway reserves.

12 *DHC* 1908, col. 11948 (McCraney).

13 Exact boundaries are given in *DHC* 1908, cols. 11151-52 (Oliver), and in the act.

14 *DHC* 1908, col. 11141 (Oliver) and col. 11957 (McCarthy).

15 Ibid.

16 *DHC* 1908, col. 11952 (Hughes).

17 *DHC* 1908, cols. 11950 and 11953 (Fowler).

18 *DHC* 1908, col. 11947 (Borden).

19 *DHC* 1908, col. 11157 (McCarthy); meaning, specifically, the preemption operation.

20 *DHC* 1908, col. 11958 (McCarthy); quoting from the instructions of the U.S. commission (italics added).

21 *DHC* July 11, 1924, col. 4392 (R. Gardner); this, cited by Peel, op. cit., p. 99, is the only reference to Cory's proposal which the author could find.

22 *DHC* 1908, col. 11951 (Hughes).

23 A.S. Morton, op. cit., pp. 143-44.

24 C.S.P. 8-9 Ed. VII (1908-9) ca. 25 Pt. 1, p. 20 (D.L. Branch).

25 C.S.P. 7-8 Ed. VII (1907-8) ca. 25 Pt. 1, p. 5 (D.L. Branch).

26 C.S.P. 9-10 Ed. VII (1910) ca. 25 Pt. 1, p. 1 (Topo. Surveys Branch); *see also* Peel, op. cit., p. 103 for a summary, and pp. 104-5 for examples of surveying rates.

27 Public Archives of Canada, Index of Township Plans of the Canadian West (Ottawa: 1974) gives fairly complete lists, the first date given for each township being the year after subdivision in most cases; for exceptions, see the original Township Diagrams and Surveyors' Reports on file at the Archives of Saskatchewan, Regina. Usually 24-township contracts were issued; in 1909-10, for example, C.A. Chilver subdivided tps. 1-4 rges. 5-10 W3 (inclusive).

28 C.S.P. 9-10 Ed. VII (1910) ca. 25, Pt. 1, p. 33 (D.L. Branch).

29 C.S.P. 8-9 Ed. VII (1908-9) ca. 25, Pt. 1, p. 20 (D.L. Branch); and Martin, op. cit., p. 191 Table 7 for Saskatchewan homestead entries 1905-27, used here and below.

30 Ibid.

31 C.S.P. 9-10 Ed. VII (1910), ca. 25, Pt. 1, p. 33 and 1 Geo. V (1911), ca. 25, p. 28: "The immigration rush during the last year [1910] has continued unabated."

32 C.S.P. 2 Geo. V (1912) ca. 25, p. 38; 3 Geo. V (1913) ca. 25, p. 33; 4 Geo. V (1914) ca. 25, p. 36; includes 12,659 homesteads, 7449 preemptions, 601 purchased homesteads and 9343 cancellations. The entry figure (20,709) amounts to the occupation of every acre of Dominion land available in 162 townships, and, subtracting cancellations, 89 townships. For 1908-14 altogether the equivalent of 477 townships of Dominion land was entered for; 365 townships after cancellations.

33 A.R. Turner, ed., Pioneer Days in Wood River District (Saskatoon: 1960), App. IV "Homestead entries to the end of 1914."

34 Rusticus (pseud.), "Wood Mountain," p. 12, BP482 Archives of Saskatchewan, Regina, Sask., 1927.

35 Peel, op. cit., p. 114.

36 VMHS Val-Echo, pp. 16-17.

37 C.S.P. 2 Geo. V (1912) ca. 25, p. 39 (Moose Jaw Agent).

38 NWMP, Report for 1914, p. 46, and C.S.P. 4 Geo. (1914) ca. 25, p. 36 (D.L. Branch).

39 Peel, op. cit., p. 121.

40 C.S.P. 2 Geo. V (1912) ca. 25, p. 39 (D.L. Branch).

41 Peel, op. cit., p. 100.

Chapter VIII Homesteading 1908-14

1 Census of Canada, 1911.

2 Census of the Prairie Provinces, 1916.

3 Lucille Tessier, "La Vie Culturelle Dans Deux Localités D'Expression Française de Diocese de Gravelbourg (Willow-Bunch et Gravelbourg), 1905-1930," Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Regina, 1974, p. 5.

4 Gilbert Johnson, "The Roumanians in Western Canada," Saskatchewan History, XIV:1 (Winter 1961), p. 66.

5 Karel D. Bicha, The American Farmer and the Canadian West Lawrence, Kansas: Coronado Press, 1968; Harold Troper, Only Farmers Need Apply Toronto: Griffin House, 1972; and Paul F. Sharp, "When Our West Moved North," American Historical Review, 55 (January 1950), pp. 286-330.

6 Allan Turner (ed.), Pioneer Days in Wood River District, Saskatoon, 1960, pp. 35-36.

7 WMHS, Wood Mountain, pp. 67-68.

8 AS (Regina), "Reminiscences of Mr. and Mrs. Niels Gording," 1970, unpublished manuscript.
9 Peel, op. cit., p. 144.
10 Ibid., p. 106.
11 AS (Regina). Edna Banks, "Swift Flowing," 1911, p. 6.
12 Ibid., p. 23.
13 Peel, op. cit., p. 147.
14 Mrs. Myrtle Moorhouse, Buffalo Horn Valley No. 920, Regina, 1973, p. 6.
15 D.B. Ferguson (ed.), Golden Memories: Assiniboia and District, Assiniboia, 1955, p. 28.
16 Peel notes that in 1912 a team of horses cost $500, while a yoke of oxen cost only about $200.
17 AS (Saskatoon). Mrs. Elizabeth Ruthig, "Homestead Days in the McCord District," pp. 1-2.
18 Banks, op. cit., p. 53.
19 Ruthig, op. cit., p. 3; and Gordon Howard, Sixty Years of Centennial in Saskatchewan n.p., 1967, p. 23.
20 Howard, op. cit., p. 23.
21 Peel, op. cit., p. 151.
22 Ruthig, op. cit., p. 3.
23 Ibid.
24 Moorhouse, op. cit., p. 10.
25 Peel, op. cit., p. 169.
26 Ibid., pp. 151-52.
27 Shepherd, West of Yesterday Toronto, 1965, p. 37.
28 Saskatchewan. Royal Commission on Agricultural and Rural Life, Report Number 10, "The Home and Family in Rural Saskatchewan." Regina, 1956, p. 22.
29 Ibid., p. 26.
30 Aneroid High School, History of Aneroid, Regina, n.d., p. 4.
31 Stonehenge School District. "History of Stonehenge School District No. 4833," 1955, p. 2.
32 Royal Commission Report No. 10, op. cit., p. 23.
33 Ibid.
34 For example, Banks, op. cit., p. 30.
35 Stonehenge School, op. cit., p. 6.
36 Ruthig, op. cit., p. 6.
37 Aneroid High School, op. cit., p. 5.
38 Banks, op. cit., p. 41.
39 Aneroid High School, op. cit., p. 5.
40 Shepherd, op. cit., p. 39.
41 For an example of settlers contracting typhoid fever from drinking slough water, see Moorhouse, op. cit., pp. 6-7.
42 Ibid., p. 8.
43 Shepherd, op. cit., p. 42.
44 The Western Producer, 28 May 1964, pp. 15, and 18.
45 Gording, op. cit., p. 9.
46 SEE Chapter 6.
47 John Bennett, Northern Plainsmen: p. 64.
48 For a fuller discussion of this, see J.G. Nelson, "Some Reflections on Man's Impact on the Landscape of the Canadian Prairies and Nearby Areas," in The Prairie Provinces, edited by P.J. Smith, Toronto, 1972, pp. 33-50.

49 Seena B. Kohl, Working Together: Women and Family in South-Western Saskatchewan, Toronto, 1976, p. 26.
50 Ibid., p. 28.
51 Ruthig, op. cit., p. 8.

Chapter IX Agriculture

1 The discussion which follows is adapted from W.W. Swanson and P.C. Armstrong, Wheat (Toronto, 1930) and Faculty of Agriculture and Home Economics, University of Manitoba, Principles and Practices of Commercial Farming (Winnipeg, revised edition, 1968).
2 Canada. Department of Agriculture. Physical and Economic Factors Related to Land Use Certification in Southwest Saskatchewan (Ottawa, 1938), 10.
3 University of Saskatchewan, College of Agriculture. Soil Survey of Southwestern Saskatchewan, Report No. 9 (1931), 6.
4 Peel, "R.M. 45" Vol. I, pp. 22-23.
5 Canada. Department of Agriculture. Physical and Economic Factors Related to..., op. cit., p. 15.
6 George Britnell, The Wheat Economy (Toronto: 1939), p. 9.
7 Soil Survey No. 9, op. cit., p. 18.
8 Britnell, op. cit., p. 9.
9 Soil Survey No. 9, op. cit., p. 5.
10 Peel, op. cit., p. 129.
11 Richard A. Bartlett, The New Country: A Social History of the American Frontier, 1776-1890 (New York: 1974), pp. 198-204.
12 Refer to Chapter 8, n. 16.
13 Peel, op. cit., p. 92.
14 AS (Regina). Edna Banks, "Swift Flowing," p. 41 and Gordon Howard, Sixty Years of Centennial in Saskatchewan (n.p., 1967), p. 38.
15 AS (Regina). Pamphlet File: Agricultural Land Use. "Land Use Surveys," Pinto Creek R.M. 75 (Box 4).
16 Grant MacEwan, Power for Prairie Plows (Saskatoon: 1974), p. 17.
17 Peel, op. cit., p. 139.
18 Stonehenge School. History of Stonehenge School District No. 4833 (n.p.: 1955), p. 3.
19 Ibid., p. 3.
20 Ibid., p. 5.
21 AS (Saskatoon). Mrs. Elizabeth Ruthig, "Ruthig Reminiscences: Reminiscences of Mrs. E. Ruthig Who with her Husband Homesteaded in the McCord District in 1909," n.p.
22 Moorhouse, op. cit., pp. 17-18.
23 Ruthig, op. cit., p. 7.
24 AS (Regina). "Reminiscences of Mr. and Mrs. Niels Gording," pp. 24-25.
25 Peel, op. cit., p. 131.
26 Ibid., p. 136.
27 In Canada. Department of Agriculture. Physical and Economic Factors Related to Land Use Classification in Southwest Central Saskatchewan, op. cit., the authors note that the coefficient of variation with respect to crop yields in the area is 72 %.
28 J.R. Bunn. Historical Outline of Agriculture in Saskatchewan as Reflected in Reports of the Department (Regina: 1955), p. iv.
29 Peel, op. cit., p. 196.

30 Bunn, op. cit., p. vii.

31 The above figures are for the rural municipality of Mankota, but since the drought was widespread and severe it is unlikely that other areas obtained anything more than marginally better returns.

32 O.L. Symes, "Agricultural Technology and Changing Life on the Prairies," in University of Regina, Proceedings of Seminar: Development of Agriculture on the Prairies (Regina: 1975), p. 36.

33 C.H. Anderson, A History of Soil Erosion by Wind in the Palliser Triangle of Western Canada (Ottawa, 1975), pp. 7-8.

34 Britnell, op. cit., 35.

35 Bruce Proudfoot, "Agriculture," in P.J. Smith (ed.) The Prairie Provinces (Toronto: 1972), p. 56.

36 S.D. Clarke, "Settlement in Saskatchewan with Special Reference to the Influence of Dry Farming," Master's thesis, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, 1931, p. 132.

37 Anderson, op. cit., p. 6.

38 Mary W.M. Hargreaves, "Dry Farming alias Scientific Farming," Agricultural History, Vol. 22 (1948), p. 39.

39 Ibid., p. 51.

40 Ibid., p. 56.

41 Karel Bicha, The American Farmer and the Canadian West, 1896-1914 (Lawrence, Kansas, 1968), p. 29.

42 See following section. Peel notes that from 1921 to 1928 agricultural techniques in Mankota did not alter appreciably.

43 Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture. Statistics Branch. "Relief Services 1907-1941" (Box 16) Typed manuscript entitled "Synopsis of Expenditure and Administration of Agricultural Relief, 1907-1941"; this source includes information on Dominion relief services as well.

44 Canada Agriculture - The First Hundred Years. Historical Series No. 1 (Ottawa: 1967).

45 J.B. Campbell, The Swift Current Research Station 1920-1970 (Ottawa: 1971), p. 14.

46 Ibid., p. 15.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid., p. 19.

50 Ibid., pp. 22-26.

51 Bunn, op. cit., p. vii.

52 J.D. Wahn, "An Appraisal of Settlement in South Western Saskatchewan," M.Sc., University of Saskatchewan, 1947, p. 68.

53 The statistics which follow cover the eight rural municipalities in Grasslands. No data covering the LID's has yet been found for this period. The statistics can be found in the files of the Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture (AS, Regina), Statistics Branch, "Statistical Survey Files."

54 Computed from the data summarized in Table 1.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid.

57 Britnell, op. cit., p. 39.

58 Table 2.

59 Table 3.

Chapter X Railways and Service Centres

1 W.A. Mackintosh, Prairie Settlement: The Geographical Setting (Toronto: 1934), p. 53.
2 Ibid., p. 57.
3 Statutes of Saskatchewan, 6 Edw. VII, C. 59.
4 Statutes of Saskatchewan, 6 Edw. VII, C. 58.
5 Hansgeorg Schlictmann, in his "Land Disposal and Patterns of Farmstead Distribution in Southern Saskatchewan" (in Regina Geographical Studies, No. 1, 1977) notes that little land was reserved by the C.P.R.
6 Peel, "R.M. 45," Vol. 1, pp. 258-66.
7 Ibid., p. 264.
8 See Table 4. All figures given below refer to this source.
9 Ponteix School, Ponteix, 1908-1955 (Ponteix: 1955), n.p.; also Historical Sketches of the Parishes of the Diocese of Gravelbourg (Winnipeg, 1955), pp. 83-84.
10 See Appendix H.
11 Ferguson, op. cit., p. 29.
12 Ibid.
13 A.N. Reid, "Local Government in the North-West Territories: The Villages," Saskatchewan History, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Winter 1951), p. 41.
14 Secretariat of the Royal Commission of Agriculture and Rural Life, "History of Rural Local Government in Saskatchewan" (Regina: 1955), p. 18, n. 14.
15 George Dawson, The Municipal System of Saskatchewan (Regina: 1976), p. 18.
16 Leo F. Kristjanson, Population Trends in the Incorporated Centres of Saskatchewan, 1926-61 (Saskatoon: 1963), p. 5.
17 The five towns are Kincaid, Lafleche, Mankota, Ponteix, and Val Marie.

Chapter XI The Organizational Society

1 L'Abbé Clovis Rondeau et L'Abbé Adrien Chabot, La Montagne de Bois, Gravelbourg, 1970, pp. 35-36.
2 Historical Sketches of the Parishes of the Diocese of Gravelbourg, Sask. on the Occasion of its Silver Jubilee (Gravelbourg: 1956), pp. 47-48.
3 Georges Hébert, Les Débuts de Gravelbourg: Son Fondateur, Ses Pionniers, Les Institutions, 1905-1965 (Gravelbourg: 1965), p. 12.
4 Ibid., p. 13.
5 Historical Sketches, op. cit., p. 79.
6 Ibid., p. 101.
7 Peel, "R.M. 45," p. 180.
8 Ibid., p. 183.
9 Ibid., p. 185.
10 Ibid., p. 300. Peel does not indicate which vote he refers to.
11 Ibid., pp. 295-96.
12 Moorhouse, op. cit., p. 20.
13 Ibid.
14 The complete story of the Cathedral is told in Eveline Gaucher, La Cathedrale (Gravelbourg: 1976).
15 Ibid.

16 Historical Sketches, op. cit., p. 49.
17 AS (Saskatoon) "Melaval Women's Auxiliary: History 1914-1962."
18 Peel, op. cit., p. 306.
19 Moorhouse, op. cit., p. 9.
20 The discussion of this common school problem, and of those that follow, is taken from Peel, op. cit., pp. 325-26.
21 AS (Saskatoon) "Milly School District No. 926," Daily Register, 1913-14.
22 For a discussion of changing attitudes towards education, see Niel Sutherland, Children in English-Canadian Society.
23 The discussion which follows relies heavily on Keith A. McLeod, "Politics, Schools and the French Language, 1881-1931," in Norman Ward and Duff Spafford (eds.) Politics in Saskatchewan. Don Mills, 1968, pp. 124-30.
24 Peel, op. cit., p. 319.
25 Moorhouse, op. cit., p. 25.
26 Ibid.
27 W.A. Mackintosh, Economic Problems of the Prairie Provinces, Toronto, p. 149.
28 Peel, op. cit., p. 277.
29 Ibid., pp. 277-78.
30 Ferguson, op. cit., p. 41.
31 Mackintosh, op. cit., pp. 132-33.
32 Royal Commissions into the grain trade in western Canada have been appointed in 1899, 1906, 1923, 1931 and 1936.
33 For complete details of this relationship, see David E. Smith, Prairie Liberalism (Toronto: 1976).
34 Although there had been earlier agrarian groups in western Canada, such as the Grange and the Patrons of Industry, these had disappeared before Grasslands was settled. The Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association (SGGA) was, therefore, the first association to represent the interests of Grasslands farmers.
35 AS (Saskatoon). SGGA Records, "List of Secretaries, 1917" (B2, II. 18).
36 Ibid., there were women's associations at Gravelbourg, Hazenmore, Lake Johnston, Quimper and Turkey Track.
37 Peel, op. cit., pp. 340-42.
38 Ibid., p. 341.
39 AS (Saskatoon). SGGA Records "Locals: Annual Reports, 1922-23" (B2, III, 8). Reports are available for the following Grasslands locals: Gravelbourg-Melaval (Germand?), North Admiral, (1922), Congress, Valor, North Admiral (1923).
40 Ibid., North Admiral report for 1922.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid., Valor Report for 1922.
43 Secretariat of the Royal Commission on Agriculture and Rural Life (hereafter cited as Secretariat). History of Rural Local Government in Saskatchewan (1955), p. 15.
44 George Dawson, The Municipal System of Saskatchewan (Regina: 1976), p. 5.
45 A.N. Reid, "Local Government in the North-West Territories, II: The Rural Municipalities," Saskatchewan History, Vol. II, No. 3 (Autumn, 1949), p. 14.
46 Statutes of Saskatchewan, 1908-09, C. 6.

47 Secretariat, op. cit., pp. 19-20.
48 Donald E. Willmott, "The Formal Organizations of Saskatchewan Farmers, 1900-65," in Anthony W. Rasporich (ed.), Western Canada: Past and Present (Calgary: 1975), pp. 28-41.
49 Ibid., p. 41.
50 Ibid.

Chapter XII Depression

1 AS (Regina). Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture, Statistics Branch, "Statistical Survey Files." The 100,000 acre figure refers only to land in the eight rural municipalities of Grasslands. At this point it is not known what acreage was seeded to field crops in the two LIDs.
2 George E. Britnell, The Wheat Economy (Toronto: 1939), p. xv.
3 W.F. Ewert, "Farm Mortgage Loaning Experience in South Central Saskatchewan," Economic Annalist Vol. IX, No. 4 (August, 1941), p. 62. See Table 2.
4 Ibid.
5 AS (Saskatoon). United Farmers of Canada Records, "Correspondence with District Directors, District 2, 1937-1948," J.A. Borgerson to Frank Eliason, 23 March 1939.
6 "Statistical Survey Files," op. cit., the figure refers to seven rural municipalities; no statistics were available for R.M. 44.
7 AS (Regina). Edna Banks, "Swift Flowing (Pioneering on South Sask. Prairie, 1911)," p. 66.
8 James H. Gray, Men Against the Desert (Saskatoon: 1967), p. 55.
9 Moorhouse, op. cit., p. 33.
10 Calculated from Table 5.
11 Gray, op. cit., p. 57.
12 AS (Regina). Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture. Statistics Branch, "Relief Services 1907-1941." Individually filed according to R.M.
13 Ibid.
14 Gray, op. cit., p. 50.
15 AS (Regina). "Relief Services," op. cit.
16 Moorhouse, op. cit., p. 22.
17 See Gray, op. cit., p. 47.
18 Ibid., pp. 144-45.
19 Calculated from Tables 1 and 6.
20 As (Saskatoon). UFC Records, "Correspondence with District Directors, District 2, 1937-1948," J.A. Borgerson to F. Eliason, 10 January 1938.
21 William Allen and E.C. Hope, The Farm Outlook for Saskatchewan (Saskatoon: 1938), 2.; cited in Britnell, op. cit., p. 69.
22 AS (Regina). Red Cross File, "Facts for Use in the Red Cross Campaign," n.d., p. 2.
23 AS (Regina). Red Cross File, "A General View of the Drought Area," n.d., p. 4.
24 D.B. MacRae and R.M. Scott, In the South Country (Saskatoon, 1934), p. 14.
25 Moorhouse, op. cit., p. 30.
26 Ibid., p. 22.
27 Ibid.

28 AS (Saskatoon). UFC Records, "Correspondence, Lisieux, 1938-1946," Clarence Sunde to Frank Eliason, 6 February 1941.

29 AS (Regina). "Reminiscences of Mr. and Mrs. Niels Gording," 1970.

30 Moorhouse, op. cit., p. 31.

31 AS (Regina). "Statistical Survey Files," op. cit.; these figures refer to acreage in the eight Grasslands rural municipalities.

32 Table 1.

33 Table 7. The population of incorporated centres declined by 5.85 % between 1931 and 1941.

34 MacRae and Scott, op. cit., p. 15.

35 Calculated from AS (Regina), "Statistical Survey Files," op. cit.

36 AS (Regina). "Statistical Survey Files," op. cit. The following table gives the percentage of decrease in the number of farms for each rural municipality in the period 1931-41.

RM	1931	1941	% Change
44	409	363	-11.24
45	478	383	-19.87
46	362	250	-30.93
73	606	528	-12.87
74	480	439	- 8.54
75	379	358	- 5.54
76	383	383	- 0.78
77	419	345	-17.66

There is an obvious correlation between proximity to the Missouri Coteau and the amount of numerical decline. Note RMs 44, 45 and 46. The reason behind the relatively high rates of decline in RMs 73 and 77 is explained by the susceptibility of local soil to soil drifting and erosion.

37 One of the best ways to measure economic activity in individual service centres is to use the credit rating information contained in the reference books of the Dun and Bradstreet Company. These books provide information on individual businesses, by town, for every centre in Canada. With them it is possible to gauge the economic performance of individuals, of types of firms, and of individual service centres. Taken cumulatively, these economic profiles can be used to probe the workings of a local or regional economy. The work required for such an analysis is, unfortunately, more time-consuming than merited by a project of this size.

38 Britnell, op. cit., p. 197.

39 Banks, op. cit., p. 68.

40 Britnell, op. cit., pp. 25-29.

41 Table 7.

42 Britnell, op. cit., p. 69.

43 Ibid., p. 31.

44 A.E. Safarian, *The Canadian Economy in the Great Depression* (Toronto: 1970), p. 41.

45 The exact figure was $526,168. Calculated from AS (Regina), Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture Statistics Branch. "Statistical Survey Files." These and all other relief amounts cited below refer only to relief distributed among the eight rural municipalities in Grasslands. No figures have yet been obtained for the two LIDs.

46 Ibid. The exact figure was $267,460.

47 The best account of the work of the Saskatchewan Relief Commission

(SRC) is Blair Neatby, "The Saskatchewan Relief Commission, 1931-1934," in Donald Swainson (ed.) Historical Essays on the Prairie Provinces (Toronto: 1970), pp. 267-88. The sketch of the SRC presented here relies heavily on Neatby's work.

48 Table 8.

49 Calculated from Table 9 and "Statistical Survey Files," op. cit. The relief figures are from 1930-31 and 1935-36, while the population figures are from 1931 and 1936, hence the approximate calculation.

50 Table 10.

51 Neatby, op. cit., p. 281.

52 For data on educational relief, see Table 11. The SRC was terminated after the 1934 provincial election. Premier Patterson distributed the responsibilities of the SRC departments among various cabinet portfolios in order to reduce staff costs. The functions of the SRC were thus continued on a decentralized basis.

53 Table 12.

54 G.E. Britnell, "Saskatchewan, 1930-1935," Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, Vol. 2, No. 2 (May, 1936), p. 154.

55 Neatby, op. cit., p. 276.

56 Gordon Howard, Sixty Years of Centennial in Saskatchewan (Regina, 1967), p. 82.

57 The discussion which follows is based upon Neatby, op. cit., pp. 276-80. See Table 13.

58 Table 14.

59 Table 15.

60 Table 16.

61 Table 17.

62 Gray, op. cit., p. 144.

63 E.W. Stapleford. Report on Rural Relief Due to Drought Conditions and Crop Failures in Western Canada, 1930-1937 (Ottawa: 1939), p. 49.

64 W.T. Easterbrook, Farm Credit in Canada (Toronto: 1938), p. 242, n. 36.

65 Ibid., p. 146.

66 Britnell, "Saskatchewan, 1930-1935," op. cit., p. 161.

67 Easterbrook, op. cit., p. 155.

68 R. McQueen, "The Farmers' Creditors' Arrangement Act, 1934," Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, Vol. 1 (February, 1935), p. 107.

69 The discussion is based on George Britnell, "The Saskatchewan Debt Adjustment Programme," Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, Vol. III (August, 1937), pp. 370-75.

70 Ibid., p. 370.

71 Table 2.

72 Calculated from A.E. Safarian, op. cit., Table 27, p. 155.

73 A. Stewart, "The Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Programme," Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, Vol. V (August, 1939), p. 314.

74 C.H. Anderson, A History of Soil Erosion by Wind in the Palliser Triangle of Western Canada (Ottawa, 1975), p. 12.

75 The AIAs of which we are aware were centred in the districts of Aneroid, Mayronne, LaFleche, Valor, and Kincaid. See AS (Regina), "Statistical Survey Files," op. cit.

76 Stewart, op. cit., p. 316.
77 Britnell, The Wheat Economy, op. cit., p. 229.
78 Anderson, op. cit., p. 14.
79 Gray, op. cit., p. 126.
80 Ibid.
81 Taken from Britnell, The Wheat Economy, op. cit., p. 232.
82 Gray, op. cit., p. 158.
83 J.K. Wiens, "An Economic Study of the Val Marie Irrigation Project," Unpublished M.Sc., University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, 1958, p. 28.
84 Allan Turner, "How Saskatchewan Dealt with her 'Dust Bowl'," Geographical Magazine, Vol. 28, No. 4 (August 1955), p. 187.
85 Ibid.
86 Wiens, op. cit., pp. 27-28.
87 AS (Regina). Pamphlet File on Irrigation, "Articles, addresses, brochures and maps regarding the South Saskatchewan river development, and an appraisal of irrigation projects owned by Canada at Val Marie, Eastend, Consul, and Maple Creek" (1952), p. 6.

Chapter XIII The Post-Depression Decades

1 The most influencial proponent of this view has been Vernon C. Fowke. See his "The National Policy - Old and New," Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, Vol. 18, No. 3 (August 1952), pp. 271-86; and The National Policy and the Wheat Economy (Toronto, 1957).
2 See Table 18 and AS (Regina) Saskatchewan. Department of Agriculture. Statistics Branch, "Statistical Survey Files." The data refers to seven of the eight rural municipalities.
3 G.C. Elliott, "Real Estate Indebtedness in Southwest Central Saskatchewan," Economic Annalist, Vol. 7, No. 1 (February 1937), p. 14.
4 Table 5.
5 See Tables 1, 19 and 20.
6 Wiens, op. cit., p. 29.
7 Ibid., p. 30.
8 Table 2.
9 Table 6.
10 George Britnell, "Dominion Legislation Affecting Western Agriculture, 1939," Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science (May, 1940), p. 280.
11 Ibid.
12 Table 28.
13 G.E. Britnell and V.C. Fowke, Canadian Agriculture in War and Peace, 1935-50 (Stanford: 1962), p. 206.
14 Table 21.
15 Britnell and Fowke, op. cit., pp. 207-8.
16 Table 21.
17 AS (Saskatoon), UFC Records "Correspondence with District Directors, District 2, 1937-48," J.E. Lidgett to G.R. Bickerton, 11 January 1942.
18 Table 18.

19 Tables 22 and 23.
20 Table 24.
21 Table 6.
22 Table 22.
23 Table 25.
24 Calculated from Tables 2 and 3.
25 Calculated from Tables 1 and 6.
26 Calculated from Tables 1 and 26.
27 Table 27.
28 Britnell, "Dominion Legislation...," op. cit., p. 282.
29 Charles Schwartz, *The Search for Stability* (Toronto: 1959), p. 195.
30 Table 7.
31 J.W. Channon, D. Zasada, and R.T. Miller, *The Rockglen Region of Saskatchewan* (Ottawa: 1969), p. 3.
32 Edmund H. Dale, "The Urban Communities of Southern Saskatchewan," in his edited work *Background Papers*: *Southern Prairies Field Excursion* (Regina: 1972), pp. 267-310. The centres are Bracken, Cadillac, Glenworth, Kincaid, Mankota, Palmer, Val Marie, Vanguard, Wood Mountain, Admiral, Woodrow, Aneroid, Fife Lake, Hazenmore, Limerick, Mazenod, Orkney, Assiniboia, Gravelbourg, LaFleche, Ponteix, Rockglen, and Willowbunch.
33 Ibid., p. 272.
34 Channon, et al., op. cit., pp. 5-7.
35 E.H. Dale, "The General Problems of Western Canada's Small Rural Towns," in *Saskatchewan Rural Themes* (Regina: 1977), p. 100.
36 Christine MacDonald, *Historical Directory of Saskatchewan Newspapers* (Saskatoon: 1951).

Appendix A. A Survey of the History of the Coal Creek Colony

1 J.B. Hedges, *The Federal Railway Land Subsidy in Canada* (Cambridge: 1934), p. 121.
2 Ibid.
3 Martin, op. cit., p. 50. The CPR received 25 million acres in 1881 for the main line of which 6 million were surrendered in 1886, but more than 6 million were later taken for branch lines and through absorbed companies (general figures).
4 H. Innis, *A History of the Canadian Pacific Railway* (Toronto: 1971), pp. 265-66.
5 J.B. Hedges, *Building the Canadian West* (New York: 1971), pp. 68-69.
6 Martin, op. cit., p. 85.
7 Hedges, *Building*, p. 389 Table II; from 1921 to 1937, for example, the company sold 3,487,922 acres, but had 3,056,405 acres returned to it by cancellation.
8 Hedges, *Building*, pp. 214-16.
9 Ibid., pp. 226-27.
10 Ibid., p. 240.
11 Ibid., p. 343.
12 Ibid., p. 404 *passim*.
13 Ibid., p. 236.
14 Ibid., pp. 405-6.
15 Ibid., p. 407.

16 Ibid., pp. 359 and 379. The Empire Settlement Act was mainly directed at Australia.

17 Ibid., pp. 359-60.

18 Ibid., p. 380. North-central Alberta dry lands are classified as 'dry subhumid'.

19 Ibid., pp. 380-81.

20 There is some confusion as to the exact date. Hedges, Building, p. 381 implies that it was 1928, and the precise date given here is from CPR, Dept. of Natural Resources File No. 93,837, letter of Feb. 5, 1930, Glenbow-Alberta Institute, Calgary (CPR records cited hereafter as GAI/CPR and file number). In J.N.K. Macalister's short "History of British Colonies placed by CPR [sic] in Western Canada, etc." of 1930 (GAI/CPR 47-524, Letter of October 27, 1930) the date of the initial agreement is given as Aug. 26, 1929. This is highly unlikely, since the colony was already underway by this time. The confusion may have arisen from one of the many revisions or ancilliary agreements (see below).

21 Note that this was less than had been provided at Sedgwick (see above).

22 GAI/CPR 47-524, Letter of Oct. 27, 1930, p. 45, and 93-837, Letter of Feb. 5, 1930 for details of the agreement.

23 Hedges, Building, p. 329. In the period 1905-15 the CPR attempted to promote the Campbell system of dryland farming on its southern Alberta holdings, but "was uniformly unsuccessful in its efforts to encourage the formation of a successful dry farming community in the eastern part of the [irrigation] block." The Vermillion and Clan Donald dry farming colonies, unlike Coal Creek, were located in an area of adequate rainfall (229).

24 J.H. Richards, ed., Atlas of Saskatchewan (Saskatoon: ca. 1969), p. 13, "Land Alienation."

25 Under the terms of the 1881 Charter, lands selected by the CPR were exempted from all taxation for twenty years, or until permanently sold to a second party. The company later successfully argued that this meant twenty years after the date of selection for each piece of land, not simply twenty years after the granting of the Charter. See J.B. Hedges, Building, pp. 81-82.

26 All information regarding disposition is from GAI/CPR 925-49 f. 14 (Land Examination Files), 1927 survey of 1-2 W3 (cited hereafter as "Survey 1927"). The status of the three omitted quarters is puzzling. Since the area was apparently CPR land before the township was subdivided (1909) they are not likely to have been Dominion land homesteads or sales; yet there is no mention of their having been sold by the CPR although the surveyor detailed CPR leases and Hudson's Bay Co. sales in the township. One possibility is that they were reserved by the Dominion for their coal about 1909 or 1910.

27 Subdivision, 1909; examined, 1910. See Ch. 7.

28 "Survey 1927."

29 Ibid; see also Hedges, Building, p. 317. This was a common CPR practice in the 1920s on its unsold lands.

30 Canada Dept. of Agriculture, Canada Land Inventory Soil Capability for Agriculture: Wood Mountain Mapsheet 72G (Ottawa: 1967).

31 "Survey 1927," Sec. 24.

32 Canada Dept. of Interior, Dominion Land Survey File No. 344, p. 8, AS (Regina).

33 Ibid., File No. 130, p. 12, AS (Regina), and A. Anderson "Rock Creek Ramblings" (AS [Regina], n.d.). Many of the ranchers were Americans.

34 All of above from "Survey 1927."

35 "Survey 1927." In both sections (16 and 28) where the surveyor specifically recommended farm sizes, he suggested 320-acre units. Both were eventually assigned as four 160-acre units.

36 See Ch. 7; the revised homestead provisions of 1908, aimed specifically at this area, encouraged settlers to take 320 acres each.

37 Farm plan drawn up from GAI/CPR 1882, Coal Creek Settlers' Accounts Ledger 1930-35 (cited hereafter as "Accounts Ledger"). The 1938 annotations of "Survey 1927" are also of interest. One each of the 240- and 160-acre farms was not used as a farm, in the end.

38 One farm was not occupied until 1930, while two others (5 and 30), the "School Farms," were never occupied by settlers.

39 GAI/CPR 1034, J. Colley Correspondence (Colonists Service Assoc., 1929-34) has materials on approvals of new families, moving assistance, etc., dealing with Coal Creek.

40 See "Survey 1927" and 1938 comments, Secs. 15 and 22.

41 All data and prices, unless otherwise stated, are from or extrapolated from entries in the "Accounts Ledger." This two-part record gives a fairly complete set of figures for each farm, although some entries are incomplete or unclear, especially regarding withdrawals. Additional acreage for five of the six (less farm 5) larger farms ranged in price from about 60 to 90% of the main unit, although in one case it was 10% more.

42 Hedges, Building, p. 389 Table II.

43 In fact, all of this material seems to have been provided by the CPR, who were then reimbursed by the British Government. There is no indication that the latter had any direct dealings with the colony at all. In addition to the totals given, the settlers were charged for such things as moving equipment to the farms and insurance premiums for the buildings.

44 GAI/CPR 93-837, Letter of Feb. 3, 1930.

45 GAI/CPR 41-476, Memo of Dec. 12, 1929 (initial draft of Supplementary Agreement).

46 Ibid., Memo of Jan. 3, 1931 from Chief Commissioner of CPR Dept. of Immigration and Colonization, Winnipeg.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid., Memo of March 15, 1932; summary of previous agreements.

49 Ibid., p. 1.

50 Ibid., p. 2.

51 GAI/CPR 37-441, Meeting of Sept. 19, 1932, p. 16.

52 Ibid., Meeting of April 27, 1933, p. 4; also source of following information.

53 Ibid., Meeting of June 30, 1933, p. 3.

54 Ibid., Meeting of Aug. 28, 1933; also source of following information.

55 At least five families, judging by the "Accounts Ledger."

56 GAI/CPR 37-441, Meeting of Aug. 28, 1933, p. 2.

57 Ibid., Meeting of Nov. 16, 1933, p. 2; summary of report.

58 See Fig. 21. These figures are partially estimated. The entries in the Accounts Ledger are not always specific. Figures for the period 1934-1937 are extrapolated from this and other evidence, and may be somewhat inaccurate. Nonetheless, they are probably quite close and, in any case, the trend is obvious.
59 Copy in GAI/CPR 41-476.
60 GAI/CPR 93-837, Letters of May 11 and May 15, 1934, Porter to Walker and vice versa.
61 GAI/CPR 37-411, Meeting of June 5, 1934, p. 3.
62 Ibid., Meeting of Sept. 4, 1934, p. 5.
63 GAI/CPR 27-354, Cable of Jan. 3, 1931, Porter to Macalister.
64 Farm 31 was transferred to J. Sheard in 1936, but he was a relative of E. Sheard of Farm No. 22, one of the original colonists.
65 GAI/CPR 27-354, Letters of Aug. 14 and Aug. 18 from Porter to Macalister and W.M. Neal, respectively.
66 GAI/CPR 41-476, Meeting of Feb. 4-5, 1937.
67 GAI/CPR 925-49 f. 14. The 1938 report consists of corrections and additions of the 1927 survey. The despatch of this appraiser is itself an indication that the 'colony period' was finished.
68 Weeds, were, in any case, bound to be a problem with so much broken but uncultivated land around. Farm No. 27, for example, had 125 acres of weeds, and was abandoned.

Appendix C. Trails

1 W. Pearce, "Notes on the history and settlement of the Canadian Northwest," photocopy of manuscript prepared 1925, Provincial Library of Manitoba, p. 156.
2 Macoun, op. cit., p. 229.
3 The main sources available for the park area include surveyors' township diagrams, and NWMP and explorers' maps, supplemented by materials in local histories. J.H. Richards, ed., Atlas of Saskatchewan (Saskatoon: 1969), p. 11 is also useful. Township diagrams (the originals of which are on file at the Archives of Saskatchewan in Regina), were not officially issued until subdivision had taken place, but data collected by the block outline surveyors were available earlier; see R.G. McConnell, op. cit., enclosed map. Many of the original trails remained in use at the time of the subdivision survey, meaning that routes can be traced with considerable accuracy. Other sources include G.M. Dawson, Report on the Geology and Resources of the Region in the Vicinity of the Forty-Ninth Parallel (Montreal: 1875), enclosed map and text; VMHS Val-Echo, p. 8; and the comments on trails scattered through, Long, op. cit.
4 Roe, The North American Buffalo (Toronto: 1972), p. 91 n. 71 and pp. 119-24. See also J.G. Nelson, "Changing Fauna of the Northern Plains Area," in J.G. Nelson, Man's Impact on the Western Canadian Landscape (Toronto: 1976), p. 48.
5 D. Jenness, quoted by F.G. Roe, The Indian and the Horse (Norman, Okla.: 1955), p. 12.
6 Roe, Horse, pp. 13-14 and VMHS Val-Echo, p. 8 show the crossings.
7 Macoun, op. cit., p. 231; Dawson, op. cit., map; and NWMP, Report for 1874, Diary Aug. 25, also Richards, op. cit., p. 11.
8 Dawson, op. cit., p. 111.

9 J.E. Parsons, *West on the 49th Parallel* (New York: 1963), p. 96.

10 Dawson, op. cit., p. 102.

11 This description follows McConnell's "Map Showing Wooded Tracts, etc." (1885). Dawson's "General Geological Map" 1874 shows the southern trail coming back into Canada to the east of the Frenchman, but is the only source which shows or describes such a route.

12 McConnell map: this trail may have been in use earlier, but contemporary sources do not mention it.

13 NWMP, *Report for 1886*, pp. 33-34.

14 The earliest township diagrams show both. *See also* the essay on the "Old Pole Trail" in the Douglas file, SHS 18 (3), AS (Regina).

15 The NWMP *"Stations and Patrols"* maps, issued every two or three years between 1886 and 1909, show remarkably little change in the trail network; although police patrol routes varied considerably (Ch. 3). That for 1888 (reprinted and widely distributed during the RCMP Centennial in 1973) shows two projected telegraph lines to the U.S. These do not appear to have been built. The Regina office of the Archives of Saskatchewan and the Public Archives of Canada have fairly complete collections of the original police maps.

16 *See* the McConnell map for the older trails. That north from Seventy Mile is not clearly marked. The later routes and new trails are mapped in VMHS *Val-Echo*, p. 8 ("Old Trails and Crossings"). While appearing crude at first glance, this map is quite accurate. *See also* Long, op. cit., 65 *passim* regarding the location and use of the later trails.

17 WMHS *Wood Mountain*, pp. 216-17.

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